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SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 1969 $1

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DISSENT

SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 1969

DISSENT is a journal devoted to radical ideas and the values of socialism and democracy. It seeks to serve as a forum for writers devoted to these ideas and values, while also welcoming a wide variety of other opinions. Each writer speaks for himself; there is no effort made to exact editorial consensus or uniformity.

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The Moon: Enough Is Enough

So we have left footprints on the face of the moon. An admirable feat. We can congratulate ourselves, we can be proud, we have shown that it can be done. Most likely, it had to be done even though the moon will never be the same again for lovers and thieves. We are still conquering nature, we lash out into space; we still keep converting the mysterious universe into something man can handle.

But let us be frank; this is not science, it is technology. With all the courage it took, with the teamwork of thousands and the backing of a powerful government, this trip to the moon was not as impressive as Galileo's calculation of the orbits of the Jupiter moons. We have discovered no new law of nature; we have not overcome gravity but used it. Remarkable, admirable, but finally an achievement more comparable to a new record in sports than to a great discovery.

Columbus did not know where he was going and what he was going to find or how long it was going to take him; he opened a new continent for settlement; Lindbergh opened a new era of worldwide communications. But despite the plans to build space stations there is no reason to believe our lives will be affected by the exploration of the moon. Some physicists' curiosity may be satisfied a little earlier—but is it worth the expense?

A little boy of six or seven, interviewed on TV, asked: why did he go to the moon? And when the interviewer did not seem to understand the question, the little boy said: perhaps he was looking to see whether you could plant food on the moon. Touching. Someone wrote a letter to the *New York Times,* saying that the show cost every one of us only $13 a year over a couple of years—no more than the price of two tickets to a ball game. Not so touching. There are many who can't go to a ball game. Unwittingly, the writer has revealed something very deep: the moon trip was a show forced on us but for which we nevertheless have to pay.

Future trips may be cheaper because the original investment will be distributed over, and amortized by, individual events. But the total cost will rise nevertheless, and entire industries that now have a vested interest in continuing the adventure are likely to propose more complicated and extended explorations. Our inevitable Vice President already has suggested a trip to Mars, ignorant, as usual, of what he was talking about, but not so unaware of the popular appeal such second-hand visions have. What for? To plant another flag?

We hope more and more people in public office will say, enough is enough! Future gains of further trips are likely to be marginal; even the excitement will wear off rather rapidly. Let people climb Mount Everest at their own risk, but let's not spend 30 billion dollars to flatten the mountain for them. Let us invite the Soviet Union to a joint trip to the moon and then sign an agreement to stop further space explorations by individual nations. Let us put all further projects into the hands of a United Nations agency and give it a limited budget not to exceed the budget of its Development Fund.

In going to the moon, we have shown that we can do the impossible. Now let us show that we can do the possible. We have broken the fetters of being earthbound; now let us break the bonds of poverty on earth. We have conquered space, now let us conquer war. —H. P.

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Stanley Plastrik

Backlash, Violence, Politics

These comments were written before President Nixon announced his new welfare program, which will be discussed in our next issue.—ED.

THAT THE PRESIDENT is often a mean-spirited man is no discovery; that he struggles painfully to overcome or conceal his character is also clear. But a president sets the tone of his administration and Nixon is no exception.

Well, what is the tone of his administration thus far? Essentially, it is set by small-minded men. High moral principles accompany heavy budget cutting. Every citizen knows, for instance, that money is the key to the problems of the city; the rest is talk. So far, this administration is one of talk, while money is not forthcoming except for military ends.

Politically, the Nixon strategy is clear enough: *to preempt the sacred American middle.* The polls indicating two-thirds of the people mildly satisfied with the administration tell us that Nixon is succeeding. But there are many "centers" in America, both political and social: urban "center" or middle-class city folk who have leaned toward progressive democracy since Roosevelt's time; rural "center," small-city and small-town America, of steadily less weight in American society and with a natural bent for the Republicanism of Nixon himself; and the "center" of the farming areas, solidly right-Republican states. Fitted together under Nixon's administration, this reestablished coalition of the center is having a revival of influence and power. It is conservative (not reactionary), courting stasis rather than change. But since it deals with living people, it cannot merely sit still; it must move, sometimes with a lurch but mostly with a glide, now to the "right," now to the "left." This is hardly an exciting administration; on the contrary, it tries to subdue excitement. Many people objected to the President's sticking his nose into the moon-landing operation because it made them think of LBJ, someone they're keen on forgetting. The present administration would prefer to float on its own "Sea of Tranquility."

WHAT MATTERS IS not so much the danger that this administration will precipitate events through its own actions, but that it will do little or nothing about the conditions that already prevail: Vietnam, the "black revolution," the city crisis, inflation and cost-of-living issues, the courts and social justice, etc. To the extent that the administration has felt compelled to act, the results are far from promising: the proposal for "preventive detention" and the significant change in the Supreme Court's composition; the sordid maneuvering to "save" something in Vietnam, if no more than a most miserable petty tyranny; the effort to castrate both voters' protection and school desegregation programs; the capitulation to AMA over the medical chief; the insistence upon making ABM (Dickey's Edsel) into a major issue.

These actions, together with recent municipal elections or primaries (Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York), have caused some on the left to cry in alarm: Police state and "cold" fascism? Imposition of reactionary laws and hardening of existing institutions?

To suggest that such outcries, at least thus far, are excessive, and to urge that there is great political and intellectual danger in using "fascism" as an all-purpose political put-down is not to deny that an important shift of temper is occurring. It is a shift among those who think of themselves as "moderate," and so far it takes "moderate" forms; if a backlash at all, it is conceived by its supporters as essentially defensive and not punitive.

Still, as the *New Republic* recently said:

> Each of these cities in upset elections rejected respectably liberal candidates in favor of men

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> who brayed about law and order, withholding meanwhile any information on how that blessed state of affairs can be brought about.

And as another sign of the moment, the Nixon administration, though trying to oscillate from left to right, is certainly lurching far more strongly to the right than the left.

All true; but not enough. Liberals and democratic leftists must accept the fact that a major issue right now is that of "crime in the streets" and "law and order." It just won't do, either by way of social understanding or political tactics, simply to yell that these are masks for racism. To some undetermined extent, they are; but that isn't all they are. Julian Bond recently said that we'd better learn why people vote for Yortys, Wallaces, Procaccinos, and Marchis, rather than contenting ourselves with denouncing them as racists (as Mayor Lindsay did in his hysterial reaction to his defeat in the primaries.) Unless we recognize the realities behind this issue and unless we remove the demagogic husk that surrounds it, the right will continue to exercise a monopoly of concern and we shall go from electoral defeat to defeat.

Specifically, our main concern here ought to be with the views and apprehensions of working-class whites, a substantial portion of whom are union members. I share the *New Republic's* conclusion that, as a starting point, "liberal disavowal of violence must be made more emphatic"—and without the slightest compromise in our devotion to due process, civil rights and liberties, black advancement, or educational reform. But simply to use the catchphrase "white backlash" as an explanation for what is happening in many parts of the country is an error. One need only imagine what a really organized "backlash" would be like to see how crude this thinking is. A letter from C. R. Winegarten of Toledo, Ohio, to the New Republic states the point excellently:

> It is necessary to give explicit and sympathetic recognition to the popular demand for personal security, and to understand that demand as no more reactionary, in itself, than the desire for full employment, safe cars, or peace in Vietnam. If we on the left continue to withhold such recognition, we shall intensify the alienation of ordinary working people, without whom we cannot hope to win and with whom the right is now most incongruously allied.

Mr. Weingarten is saying that neither Yorty in Los Angeles nor Stenvig in Minneapolis nor Procaccino in New York need have won. After all, the Negro liberal Bradley in Los Angeles received 48 percent of the vote! And the four liberal and radical Democratic candidates in the New York primary (Wagner, Badillo, Scheuer, and Mailer) received a combined vote of more than 500,000 or 2 to 1 against Procaccino. The vote against the two real or quasi-backlash candidates (Procaccino and Marchi) was 623,111 or 63 percent of the total for *both* parties! If this is "white backlash," let us hope it never gets more serious.

If liberal and radical forces in these campaigns had recognized the authenticity of the concern over crime and security, without yielding an inch to the dangerous sentiments that attach themselves to this concern; if they had developed a positive program on this issue, involving among other things restraint and retraining of the police, the outcome of these elections might have been different. In my own dwelling, for example, where at least five muggings and robberies, always involving elderly people, have taken place since the start of the year, shall we say that the right of these people to spend their final years in tranquility and safety is not every bit as legitimate as other civil rights? These are New Yorkers who have voted liberal-democratic since the days of FDR; yet I know a considerable number who shifted to Procaccino.

No misunderstandings, please. I do not say there is any reason whatever to approve such shifts; quite the contrary. But what I want to urge is this: If we are asked to understand the sociopsychic causes of black rage and violence, as indeed we should, then must we not also try to understand the sociopsychic causes of white fear? And this fear isn't mainly a matter of rich or middle-class or intellectual whites; no, it is strongest among working-class whites who have been the main bulwark of liberal victories. If it is important to grasp the outlook of a desperate black youngster, isn't it also important to grasp the response of an aging garment worker?

In New York City, one must conclude reluctantly that there is little else to do but cast a vote for John Lindsay—reluctantly, because this arrogant and incompetent man has pursued a divisive ethnic and racial policy contributing to the chaos of our city. The

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alternative is the incredible Procaccino who, if scarcely a vicious racist, is the epitome of narrow-minded limitations. Especially disappointing in New York is the uncertainty and ineffectiveness of the liberal Democratic wing, the New Democratic Coalition. Surely the most lively and forward-looking section of the party, these young Democrats have permitted their leadership to be heavily infiltrated by "new left" ideologues who have interests other than the concerns of New York. During the primary, the NDC showed a singular lack of sensitivity to the "crime in the street" issue, and, more recently, an incapacity to negotiate with Mayor Lindsay so as to forge a coalition that in November would address a progressive appeal to New York's still liberal population. The New Democratic Coalition showed far more concern over jobs, etc., in Lindsay's doubtful second administration than in forcing the Mayor to change his stance. As a result, Procaccino remains a likely winner.

IF MUNICIPAL AND STATEWIDE ELECTIONS continue on this rightward trend, the Nixon administration will follow suit. The president is a weak man, all his instincts are weak. Even his gut conservatism is without conviction and drive. But he scents the trend and his cabinet is built to respond; his political weight can easily shift further to the right, and men like HEW Secretary Finch can go or be quelled. It is an inert and institutionalized conservatism that we have most to fear: the proposal for "preventive detention" (a clear violation of the Constitution); the proposal giving federal narcotics agents authority to break unannounced into private residences; the significant growth and use of wiretapping by the FBI and other agencies.

TO RETURN for a moment to the theme of violence and the failure of substantial sections of the left to repudiate it decisively as a means to progress: I share the view of those who deny that America and its people are "violence prone," or that our history is abnormally rich in the use of violence. We are not much better or worse than others. (The land of Gandhi's "satayagraha," for instance, has a history drenched in bloodshed.) But I do believe there is a new and startling attitude on the issue of violence in America, expressed in two ways: (a) an increased "understanding" and condoning of violence on the part of liberals, induced either by "guilt" or intimidation and implying a loss of belief in our capacity for social change; (b) the spreading notion that "violence will out," that rage need not, ought not, be controlled. One sees this everywhere: in schools, in the streets, in conversation.

Many years ago Trotsky said that in the 20th century we live on our nerves. But he never suggested that thinking was no longer part of living. The resort to violence, or condoning it, is politically and socially self-defeating, and we of the democratic left ought to cling hard to this truth. Our power does not come out of the barrel of a gun.

Robert J. Christen

A Major Dispute In the ACLU

FOR NEARLY A HALF CENTURY the American Civil Liberties Union functioned, to quote the late Elmer Rice, as "a nonpolitical, nonpartisan, nonsectarian organization whose sole purpose is the protection and perpetuation of those rights and liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights to every American." By carefully refraining from taking sides on what Rice called "debatable questions of doctrine, dogma, propriety, or morality," the ACLU established an enviable reputation as a politically disinterested but highly effective guardian of "the rights of the individual within the structure of the law," an organization in which people of varying political views could work together for the common end of civil liberties.

Now, however, that reputation and the future effectiveness, if not the very survival, of the ACLU is threatened by a basic policy rift. On one side stand those, such as Professor Herman Schwartz, who believe that the time has come for the ACLU to "go beyond traditional civil liberties concerns to work for social and distributive justice" and what is called "a meaningful democratic participation." On the other side stand those who subscribe with veteran civil libertarian Osmond Fraenkel to the view that

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"to expand our interests in the area of 'general welfare' or social reform would deprive us of our unique position as protector of liberty for all and confuse us with the many reform organizations active in the field."

These diverging opinions at once suggest the depth of division and document its effect, for the statements of Schwartz and Fraenkel were issued this spring in the course of a heatedly contested election for the board of directors of the New York Civil Liberties Union, the ACLU's largest and most influential affiliate. This contest was itself a direct consequence of a sharp difference of opinion within the NYCLU over the board's decision in the fall of 1968 to forsake its usual posture of political neutrality and plunge into the then-raging New York City school controversy. It did so as a partisan of school decentralization and community control and, by extension, of the governing board of the experimental Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district. This was the school board that had triggered the crisis in the first place by its arbitrary, if not capricious, attempt in May 1969 to oust 19 teachers from their assignments in the district. Certainly, if this conduct of the NYCLU does not argue against the politicalization of the ACLU, it clearly indicates that, unless the present trend is reversed, the determination of what is or is not a civil liberties issue is likely to hinge less on legal and constitutional considerations and more on what Elmer Rice would call questions of propriety and morality.

From the beginning, the NYCLU reaction to the goings-on in Ocean Hill was peculiar. Although not ordinarily prone to minimizing due process issues, the NYCLU confined itself at first to the release of a rather tepid press statement affirming support for due process for teachers. Then, on October 10, during the time between the second and third of New York's school shutdowns, it published a pamphlet entitled "The Burden of Blame: A Report on the Ocean Hill-Brownsville School Controversy" which purported to disprove the charge of the teachers' union that the rights of the 19 teachers had been violated. This claim, "The Burden of Blame" contended, was a "myth," "manufactured out of thin air," employed by the United Federation of Teachers as a "smokescreen" to discredit school decentralization and "sabotage" efforts to secure educational equality for New York's disadvantaged Negro and Puerto Rican children. The proof of all this was the alleged discovery by the staff of the NYCLU that the local board had not attempted to "fire" the teachers, but merely to transfer them out of the district. The authors of "The Burden of Blame" intimated that the Ocean Hill board was guilty of no more than a technical violation of procedure, attributable to the failure of the central board of education to spell out the bounds of the local board's authority.

The accuracy of the NYCLU pamphlet was immediately challenged, not only by the UFT but also by civil libertarians including members of the national Academic Freedom Committee of the ACLU and by Dr. Bert Swanson, Executive Director of the Niemeyer Commission. (The NYCLU claimed that the report of the Niemeyer Commission on experimental school decentralization had provided the main source for the findings of "The Burden of Blame.")

The fact that members of a national ACLU committee took issue with an affiliate produced something of an organizational crisis. According to a high ACLU official, this marked the first occasion on which such a committee had questioned the activities of an affiliate. Clearly, the New York affiliate did not take kindly to the idea. Aryeh Neier, executive director of the NYCLU, huffily insisted that the position taken (or supposedly taken) by the NYCLU board on community control was "beyond the purview of the ACLU Academic Freedom Committee." Consequently, Neier said, he saw no point in debating it before that committee.

Neier and his associate director Ira Glasser proved equally resistant to accounting for the many factual inaccuracies present in "The Burden of Blame," which they had coauthored. Although both attended a meeting of the Academic Freedom Committee in November, they refused to admit that they had either carelessly or deliberately inverted the sequence of critical developments in the Ocean Hill conflict, despite irrefutable proof that they had. Nor did they explain why they touted as a great discovery the information that the 19 teachers had not actually been dismissed outright, when it was pointed out that the *New York Times* had reported this fact on May 10, 1968.

Instead of troubling to come to grips with these and other serious criticisms of their pamphlet, Neier said his only regret was that

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the pamphlet had not attacked the Council of Supervisory Associations with the same gusto with which it had attacked the United Federation of Teachers and the central board of education, and had not criticized the *New York Times* for distorted reporting. It would be interesting to know whether the directors of the NYCLU, who ultimately must bear responsibility for what is done in their name, share Neier's regret that they passed up the opportunity to judge what news is fit to print. The fact that at a later stage in the school controversy Neier issued a press release attacking the accuracy of material circulated by the UFT at least suggests that the NYCLU has been rethinking its traditional support of free expression.

IN MANY RESPECTS the most disturbing aspect of "The Burden of Blame" was the degree to which its authors indulged in condemnation of the UFT for what they assumed to be the *motives* of the Union. Herman Benson, a member of the ACLU's Labor-Business Committee who emerged during the ensuing controversy as a leader of the dissident NYCLU group, pointed out that the task of the ACLU is to defend civil liberties, not expose real or alleged hypocrisy. Whether the UFT was being hypocritical or not in focusing attention on the denial of due process, Benson said, should not alter the teachers' right to protection against arbitrary treatment, or relieve the NYCLU of its obligation to exert itself in behalf of the teachers' rights. Attorney Stephen Vladeck, a former and longtime NYCLU board member and counsel, put the matter more bluntly. Once, he said, the NYCLU starts inquiring into people's motives, it "might as well give up." He and others cited numerous instances in which the NYCLU had defended the civil liberties of persons whose political motives were plainly antithetic to civil liberties principles.

Neier and his supporters in the NYCLU responded by insisting that there was nothing unusual in the NYCLU's indulging in speculation about motives. Neier attempted to persuade the members of the Academic Freedom Committee that questioning the motives of the UFT was of a piece with the NYCLU's criticism of Catholic authorities who sought to substitute the language of the First Amendment for the explicit prohibition in the New York State constitution on aid to parochial schools, and to the NYCLU's criticism of the police for opposing civilian review boards. Then, as if to demonstrate that he could not be deterred from this approach to his duties, he said that he suspected what his critics within the Civil Liberties Union "really mean is that it is unusual for NYCLU to attribute base motives to our own kind—i.e., teachers, principals and Board of Education lay and staff members." "As long as it is only police and Catholics and others outside the civil liberties family to whom we attribute motives, we don't seem to get any criticism from within the family," Neier added.

Speaking personally, I found it amusing to learn that, as a Catholic, despite a decade of service on the Academic Freedom Committee, I do not qualify as a member of the civil liberties family. But, on a more serious note, Mr. Neier's glib remark served to remind me of a case involving a Catholic institution that does not share the concern for safeguarding academic freedom, a concern fortunately manifest at Manhattan College, a Catholic college at which I teach. The case that came to mind was strikingly similar to the Ocean Hill case in several respects. I am referring to the summary removal from their teaching duties of a score or more of professors, in December 1965, by St. John's University. In that case, Neier and the NYCLU quite properly refrained from delving into motives and forthrightly condemned the action of the University for what is was, a prima facie case of the denial of due process. Nor did the NYCLU attempt to apportion blame. It stood foursquare then for the right of teachers to due process, regardless of whether they were tenured, regardless of the institution's assurances that the teachers whose services were being terminated would be paid in full for the unexpired portions of their contracts, regardless of the fact that the University may not have violated any of its own rules, and regardless of indications that a majority of the school's faculty, student body, and alumni approved of the administration's peremptory action.

There is another significant point to be made in comparing the NYCLU's handling of the St. John's and Ocean Hill cases. In the former, the Civil Liberties Union left it to the American Association of University Professors to write the report. The AAUP approached that task

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with its usual scrupulous regard for fairness. Despite what appeared to be one of the most flagrant cases of the denial of academic due-process in American history, the AAUP afforded *all parties the opportunity to reply to charges and published its report only after impartial investigation.* By contrast, the NYCLU report was rushed into print *without any attempt being made to allow the accused to answer the charge.* As a member of the Academic Freedom Committee observed, the NYCLU report, on its face, was "tendentious and out of keeping with judiciousness."

This line of criticism brought forth some revealing comments from Ira Glasser. Before the Academic Freedom Committee, Glasser brushed aside criticisms relayed to the Committee from Dr. Swanson of the Niemeyer Commission. Swanson had pointed to basic errors in "The Burden of Blame." He noted that anyone who read the Niemeyer Report carefully could not have reached the same conclusions as the NYCLU authors, and that in view of the polemical nature of "The Burden of Blame," it constituted a dangerous precedent for the handling of such situations. Glasser made the rather curious comment that because the Niemeyer Commission was committed to only a *certain* degree of decentralization, its basic premises and presumably its assessment of the facts had to be different from those of the NYCLU. He then went on to say that the NYCLU had every intention of affecting events with its report. He scorned the suggestion that it should comport itself in such matters as the AAUP did. "It is the sheerest nonsense to suggest that such reports should not be issued in 'the middle of the conflict,' " Glasser remarked. "We are not academics seeking remote judgments made only when we are safely removed from the events. We are trying to affect events."

Glasser's unconcern for the accuracy of what he had to say, so long as what he said had the propagandistic effect intended, has been demonstrated repeatedly. In March, for example, in a newspaper interview calculated to demonstrate the viciousness of the New York City school system, he insisted that it was common practice in New York to consign troublesome first-grade pupils to special schools which, he implied, are little better than prisons. In fact, however, boys are not accepted in the City's "600" schools below the fifth-grade level and girls are not admitted under the age of thirteen. But Glasser apparently is not interested in such details.

The cavalier attitude of the NYCLU staff and its board of directors toward the accuracy of NYCLU pronouncements confirmed the suspicions of a number of New York civil libertarians that the present leadership prefers the organization play an active and partisan role on the political scene rather than retain its traditional role as an organization devoted to civil liberties.

IN CONSEQUENCE, several hundred NYCLU members resigned from the organization. Emanuel Redfield, at one time the NYCLU's general counsel and for 27 years a member of its board, angrily observed: "Once we exerted our energies toward fomenting a climate of civil liberties; now there is a devotion to a nihilistic attitude toward society." Although Redfield's additional comment about the immaturity and egomania of the present NYCLU staff drew a sharp rejoinder from Executive Director Neier, most of those who protested against "The Burden of Blame" or who offered their resignations received no reply. But not all NYCLU members who disagreed with the position taken in the school controversy were prepared to quit the organization. Herman Benson and several score of others determined to do what they could to persuade the NYCLU board to repudiate "The Burden of Blame" and abandon the turn to political partisanship.

In March, at the prompting of Benson and his supporters, spokesmen for the NYCLU board engaged in a public debate with members of the dissident group. Two months earlier Ira Glasser had candidly admitted that " 'The Burden of Blame' was a political pamphlet which attacked a political position of an organization." In the March debate Reverend Howard Moody, speaking for the NYCLU board, made no effort to disguise the CLU's role in the school situation. Demanding to know when "political" had become a dirty word, he went on to suggest at the March meeting that if the CLU refrained from participating in the school controversy as a partisan, it would run the risk of being "remembered as a relic of immense irrelevancy."

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THIS APPROACH TOUCHES a sensitive chord in the minds of many liberals. Professor Oscar Goodman of the Academic Freedom Committee, for example, while acknowledging that there had been "hanky-panky" by the Ocean Hill-Brownsville board, insisted that the overriding issue is "the massive and continuing deprivation of freedom to learn of generation after generation of ghetto children. . . . That's where the battlements are, and that's where we should make our loud proclamations."

The members of the NYCLU who reject this line of reasoning do so not out of callous indifference to the enormous social injustices existing in American society, but rather in the belief that in the long run the democratic process, for all its imperfections, offers the best hope for ending those injustices. They see the Civil Liberties Union as an organization dedicated to the preservation and extension of democratic principles, a partisan of civil liberties, but not of one side or another in the unending struggle for power over and within the nation's institutions. "The crux of our argument," one of Benson's supporters wrote, "is that the NYCLU engages in this kind of politics at the risk of its libertarian soul. When it becomes a partisan of one of the contending forces, it has compromised its role as the defender of the civil rights of its opponents."

There is another basic principle involved, that of the limited-purpose organization. By a limited-purpose organization I mean one that, in behalf of a particular purpose or class of purposes (e.g., civil liberties, the changing of divorce laws, the ending of the Vietnam war), can bring together people of widely different political and social opinions. In a limited-purpose organization such people work together effectively, while pursuing other and perhaps larger ends elsewhere, through political parties, trade unions, community organizations, etc. Thus, the main objection to the CLU's intervention on the side of Ocean Hill-Brownsville would be not that it chose the "wrong" side, but that this was an issue it had no business getting involved with at all. The complicated social and economic matters involved should have been left to citizens to work out, either as individuals or through a range of other organizations. The great advantage of such a procedure is that it would allow people of radically different opinions on many matters—e.g., those for the UFT, those for Ocean Hill-Brownsville—to continue working together in the ACLU on behalf of civil liberties. The great disadvantage of the Neier course is that it forces partisans of at least one side to regard the CLU as a political opponent and thereby to weaken their attachment to it. I have heard an old Jewish saying, it's not necessary to dance at all the weddings.

At this time it is not clear which view will finally prevail. The recent board elections were not conclusive. Only a third of the Union's 27,000 members returned their ballots. Dissident candidates, those critical of the Neier administration of the CLU, polled approximately 40 percent of the vote, a quite substantial showing for a group organized only a few weeks earlier. Although the board incumbents seeking reelection were all returned to office, some of them in their campaign statements at least indicated, as did Osmond Fraenkel, that they were not prepared to abandon the provision of the ACLU constitution which states that the purpose of the organization is "to maintain and advance civil liberties, including the freedoms of association, press, religion, and speech . . . wholly without political partisanship." Moreover, several dissident candidates from NYCLU chapters were elected to the state board. In a real sense, the internal battle has just begun.

The ultimate outcome of the struggle within the New York affiliate is certain to have an important bearing on the future of the parent organization. In its current drive for new members, the ACLU proudly recalls a laudatory comment which appeared in the *Christian Science Monitor*. Quoting Voltaire's "I do not agree with a word you say, but will defend to the death your right to say it," the *Monitor* observed: "It would be hard to find a more searching test of the genuineness of democratic sentiments than is implicit in this famous dictum. And," the *Monitor* continued, "it would be equally hard to find an organization that subjects itself to this test more often and more willingly than does the American Civil Liberties Union. . . ." Here is hoping the ACLU will continue to meet that test.

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Jim Williams

ALA Prospects; Contest In UMW; Charleston Strike

THE ALLIANCE FOR LABOR ACTION, after some initial false starts, has held its first conclave formally linking the world's two largest unions, the United Auto Workers and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

"The friendship was there all the time," hails UAW's *Solidarity*, "a truck driver tapping his horn, waving to a UAW neighbor on his way to the factory, and getting a big grin back." Well, maybe. But one is hard-pressed to remember any time when Reuther and Hoffa got along. In fact, one remembers instances of great hostility between the UAW and the Teamsters at almost every level. To ignore the problems and differences between the UAW and the IBT is to invite confusion about ALA in the future.

Unlike the UAW, the Teamsters' union is a decentralized agglomerate of several more-or-less independent fiefdoms. Its various district presidents call the shots as they see them, much more so with Fitzsimmons than with Hoffa. The extent to which ALA is accepted by the IBT depends upon winning the allegiance of each of these chieftains. (Obviously, Harold Gibbons's Missouri Conference of Teamsters is very much in favor of ALA's announced social action programs, while others may not take this view.)

And, again, the Teamsters don't have the reputation of a group of starry-eyed idealists reaching for new coalitions with blacks, youth, and the poor. Teamster political action tends to be industry-oriented; often in coordination with employer-highway lobbies.

The Teamsters really weren't hurt when they were expelled from the AFL–CIO over a decade ago. They are big enough to afford whatever central services are required to do trade-union business, and not to be forced to depend upon bodies like AFL–CIO. In many local areas AFL–CIO unions and Central Labor Councils continued to work closely with the Teamsters—to the point where it is difficult to determine what expulsion actually did accomplish. In fact, despite protests from a few people at AFL–CIO headquarters, this kind of grass-roots cooperation is likely to continue with ALA.

The main problem at this point is to decide what elements of the ALA idea are real. I place the most confidence in the plans for joint organizing by UAW and IBT. This approach could be highly effective in many areas. In some places the Teamsters can control the flow of goods in and out of plants, and so perhaps pressure employers into union recognition. In others, Teamster drivers could pass the union word along into unorganized plants where they make deliveries.

You can look for hot organizing activity in the South, among white-collar types and in certain "glamour" industries, like aerospace. The Teamsters have placed Bill Genoese, generally regarded their top organizer, as their man in the ALA's organizing structure.

In community organizing the Teamsters have let the UAW carry the ball. As a result, Wiley A. Branton, formerly director of the poverty program in Washington, D.C., was named to head the Community and Social Action division. Branton got good marks from the established civil rights groups, and if he didn't manage to abolish poverty single-handedly in the nation's capital he can hardly be blamed.

The ALA founding session produced a lot of resolutions, ranging from condemnation of the ABM system and the Vietnam war to more conventional economic and political proposals not all that different from those of the AFL–CIO.

There's reason to be hopeful and skeptical at the same time. Any organization with the manpower and financial resources ALA has behind it could become an important force. Nor is there reason to suppose that the split between ALA and AFL–CIO must automatically "harm" labor. (After all, the CIO prodded the old AFL into considerable improvements in the years between split and reunion.) And the ALA resolutions on both the war and ABM are refreshing contrasts to what one hears from AFL–CIO.

Yet one may be a little wary about the commitment of both unions when push comes to shove. How far will the Teamsters go—in action, not merely resolutions—when it comes to social change? UAW, for its part, can still produce some splendid rhetoric, but too many of its projects seem to end about there. Perhaps all we can say is, wait and see. That seems to be the reaction of other unions, few of which—apart from District 65, RWDSU (Retail,

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Wholesale and Department Store Union), and the telephone workers of Pennsylvania—have rushed to connect with the ALA.

The ideas and rhetoric of ALA, and the initial steps it has taken, all are fine for those so long disheartened by the cold-war outlook of the AFL–CIO. We wish the ALA well and hope it prospers. But rhetoric is still rhetoric, and "kind words butter no parsnips."

IT LOOKS as if coal miners may have a choice between candidates for president of the United Mine Workers this December, the first serious contest since John Brophy ran against John L. Lewis in the 1920s. The antagonists are the incumbent W. A. "Tony" Boyle and Joseph A. Yablonski, a UMW board member and director of the Miners' Nonpartisan League. Yablonski was once president of UMW District 5, until forced out by Boyle some years back.

To run for UMW president, you must first get nominated by 50 of the UMW's 1,200 locals; it used to be 5, but Boyle had that changed after his candidacy was contested by candidate Steve Kochis in 1964. Yablonski managed to get a federal court order to compel the UMW officialdom to distribute his campaign literature to the entire UMW mailing list, so at least people will know he's around. He has received slight, if any, mention in the UMWA *Journal*. The *Journal's* July 1 issue carried a half-dozen or so pictures of Boyle in its 24 pages—and in another recent 24-page issue Boyle's picture appeared 31 times.

In late June Yablonski was struck unconscious by a blow from behind while speaking at a miners' meeting in Springfield, Illinois. The next day his running mate Elmer Brown of West Virginia, who is running for UMW vice president, had a meeting broken up by thugs in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania. A Landrum-Griffin violation has been cited to the Justice Department. In fact, Yablonski has made 17 allegations to the Justice Department.

Boyle, in his campaign, is not so unsubtle as to ignore the carrot entirely. When he was named to replace John L. Lewis as the union representative on the Miners' Health and Retirement Fund last month, his first act was to vote, along with industry representative George Judy, to raise miners' pensions from $115 a month to $150. A UMW spokesman denied that the benefit increase was strictly a vote-getting move, but admitted that the pension-fund benefits are "one of the main things the members have been yelling about." In any case, even if Yablonski achieves nothing else, he can claim some of the credit for pressuring Boyle into this move: which shows that even in unions where it's not always strongly in evidence, democracy is worth something.

Which brings us to Yablonski himself. Earlier this year, when there were a number of minor candidates in the race (most have dropped out), I asked a friend, who could possibly beat Boyle? Yablonski, was the reply. Yablonski was then not running.

But he was campaigning. He was campaigning for Tony Boyle at a series of hastily-called UMW "rallies" in the wake of the black-lung revolt. He was the guy who introduced Boyle. Then, almost overnight, Yablonski announced, in his initial speech: ". . . I cannot stand silent. . . ." But he had not only been silent, he had just finished praising Caesar. Now he wants to bury him.

Still, if Boyle & Co. are to be defeated, it has to be an inside job. It has to be done by a candidate with national exposure who knows the ins and outs of the union and has some following. It also has to be done by somebody who senses what is on the minds of the rank and file, and who is willing to respond to that. Yablonski meets these qualifications. His campaign literature and platform are excellent—pointing at the real issues in the campaign.

For the first time, Boyle and his cronies are having to beat the hustings, and to sell themselves to the rank and file.

HOORAY for the Charleston hospital strikers! Hooray for the Local 1199 Drug and Hospital Workers, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the AFL–CIO, and the UAW (which contributed heavily to the strike fund), all of whom worked together to bring about a measure of victory.

The 100-day strike against the Medical College of South Carolina brought acceptance of union conditions and raises up to 70 cents an hour. It was a major breakthrough in one of the worst antilabor areas in the nation. More important, it indicates that it is still possible to forge real unity between labor and the black

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community in the South. That's pretty refreshing in view of the hostilities between labor and blacks in the North.

The readiness of black people in the South to fight for a union is no secret. It is one of the great shames of the labor movement that it has not been sufficiently attuned to this fact. Some unions, though aware of it, were afraid to follow up: they didn't want to get the reputation among white workers of being a "nigger union."

White racism in the South often gets handled with kid gloves by too many unionists. As a result unions have tended to leave black people unorganized in the hope of winning the whites. When that great task is achieved, *then* blacks will follow—so the argument goes.

That ain't true. The Charleston strike proves that blacks can build a solid union. And my money says that white workers in Charleston will get the message and organize too. I recall, just a few years back, on an organizing campaign at a large electronics plant in Memphis, that many of the white workers looked to the black workers in the plant for leadership. Because there was a civil rights movement and the blacks had a reputation for winning, they were actually looked up to. Other Southern organizers can relate similar instances.

Let's hope the Charleston strike nails the myth that whites and blacks don't mix in Southern unionism, and let's hope that it is only a beginning.

Frank Riessman

The Trap of Localism

PROGRESSIVE PROGRAMS today have difficulty in finding a constituency that will demand basic redistribution of resources in the society. Progressive forces have demanded, of course, that the war in Vietnam be ended, and have hoped that this will lead to increased investment and greater public control in the social-welfare sector of the society.

A swift end to the Vietnam war would be a victory for liberal and radical intellectuals, students, and a great number of silent Americans. But it will be only a partial victory if there is no major shift in resources, if the missile race continues and the concern about phony "gaps" remains central to the country's economy. Basic change is most unlikely in light of the new conservative power in America and the disunity among progressive forces who have shifted their attention to local agendas.

Consequently, no significant effort is made to bring about a major alliance between old and new progressive forces that would focus on shifting the war economy to a social-welfare, public-controlled economy. On the contrary, no such large demands are being made by any major group, and this failure is occurring at a point when it is likely that there will be a decline in the war atmosphere and perhaps a consequent possibility for a turn toward an authentic welfare society. For the most part, however, liberal and radical forces seem to accept rather apathetically that no such turn will take place. Their energies are now thrown almost entirely into local demands: battles of decentralization and local control, particularly in the educational system; union rights in the public sector, welfare-client rights, and critiques of the credential system; new approaches to training, manpower development, and demands for guaranteed income; black capitalism, accompanied by the decline in demands for integration.

In essence, the new progressive groups are demanding changes in the *secondary targets,* the secondary institutions—the educational system, the welfare system, local turf control —while leaving the primary institutions and targets intact. The issues of secondary targets must be attacked for a number of reasons: they protect the primary institutions; they are in the forefront of people's attention, thus aiding in the building of constituencies, programs, and support; they raise the issues of new income and new rights which in turn will set precedents for the major national issues of public control of resources on a large scale and the concern about welfare-service issues on a national agenda in contrast to military, private-sector interest and control.

However, unless the larger picture is kept in mind, and unless the *connections are made between the new-agenda radical politics and the persisting radical agenda of major resources, direction, and control in the society,*

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an enormous, distractive delay can take place in the building of a new, significant progressive politics. We are likely to experience a period in which the conservatives will consolidate their major control and the progressive forces will fight among themselves for division of much smaller turfs—although establishing precedents in the minds of people. These precedents may have important significance in the future, when the issues of local control are converted into issues of national, public control and the new income is appropriately redistributed so that large numbers of people have useful, relevant services and rights.

THE NEW PROGRESSIVES must carefully develop criteria of social accountability. Thus, for example, the goal of winning local control of the schools has to shift to gaining an improved educational program that will lead black youngsters to equality. The old argument for integration has always been that an integrated school system will be a better school system and will lead black students to greater equality in our society. The criterion is correct but the thesis has not been significantly tested. Because integration was difficult to achieve, however, a new alliance has arisen which argues that a desegregated, but separate, community-controlled school system will be a better school system for black youngsters. This theory ought to be carefully tested to see whether the new school system can lead to greater equality and whether educational gains will help blacks become an integral part of our society.

Similar questions must be raised about the new plans to achieve control of the welfare system, and to separate social services from income maintenance. Will then welfare recipients receive better services? Would guaranteed income help them overcome poverty? Would the new rights lead to a better way of life, more income, more appropriate services—or are such rights largely sociotherapeutic? Would greater local public control of the health system lead to improved and expanded health services for large segments of the population? If not, *would rights be replacing services and income, rather than serving to win both?*

Unless the new radicals pay attention to the importance of allocating resources, their highly significant new concern for participation and rights will not result in an improved life for their constituencies in the sense of greater resources, services, and amenities. *A voice without income will result in a new participatory sociotherapy—or in a political democracy without economic democracy.*

We need an integration of the two, of the old radicalism and the new radicalism, of rights and resources. Without such a combination we will have empty political victories, with major establishment groups making minor concessions in order to maintain their overall power. Progressive movements will be coopted by small pay-offs, and the presumed escalated backlash will not even be necessary. A new temporary stability will be achieved by the Nixon administration; the major-power forces will remain in power: the middle-class group will like the quiescent period and the progressive forces will be due for small gains that will appear highly militant and radical on the surface—until people wise up!

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Brendan Sexton

Remembering John L. Lewis

Tribune, Rebel, Autocrat

Think of me as a miner and you won't make any mistakes . . . .—*John L. Lewis*

JOHN LLEWELYN LEWIS was a miner, and he was very Welsh, his huge lungs filled with the coal dust, bitterness, rebellion, and majestic rhetoric of the Welsh coal fields. An Iowan by birth, Lewis became the voice of the American miner and his fearsome prophet.

"I have never faltered or failed to present the cause or plead the case of the mine workers of this country . . . not in the quavering tones of a feeble mendicant asking alms, but in the thundering voice of the captain of a mighty host, demanding the rights to which free men are entitled."

The prophet was eloquent. He was learned, witty, and courageous. He was also ruthless, vindicative, and weirdly conservative, sometimes even reactionary. He created and he destroyed. Without him there might not have been a CIO. He was more than its first chairman. He found the way—the money and the men—to help organize workers in steel, rubber, auto, metal, and meat-packing.

In 1936 industrial unionism was an idea whose time probably had come, but it was Lewis who led David Dubinsky, Sidney Hillman, and others to stand in opposition to the AFL and for the CIO. But for that move, the great unions in steel, auto, and rubber might not have taken hold, certainly not so quickly and firmly.[1]

When picket lines finally stretched for miles outside the rubber plants in Akron; when the desperate sit-downs struck the auto plants in Flint and Detroit, Michigan and Anderson, Indiana; when Little Steel went down—Lewis was there, the ultimate leader of all.

It was Lewis who, in private meetings with corporation president Myron Taylor, negotiated the breakthrough agreement with U.S. Steel. And it was Lewis who worked out the settlements of the GM and Chrysler sit-down strikes.

In those early struggles he employed as aides Franz Daniels, Rose Pesotta, Leo Kryzcki, Mary Donovan, Clint Golden, and other intellectually-inclined dissidents —though just a few years earlier he had cursed them all. He sought out and gave command to John Brophy, the wonderfully gentle and selfless Catholic radical. (Earlier, he may have stolen the presidency of the Miners' Union from Brophy when the latter opposed him in a bitter and violent contest.) He even hired Powers Hapgood, the Harvard-bred socialist who had worked in the mines and helped organize more than one rebellion against Lewis.

He drew into the inner circle of CIO leadership Adolph Germer who, as National Secretary of the Socialist party, had gone to jail for opposing World War I, and had been brass-knuckled by Lewis supporters in Illinois when he was the workhorse of a formidable opposition to Lewis.

He acceded to Sidney Hillman's leadership of the Textile Workers Organizing

[1] Aside to *some* young radicals: When John Lewis set out to organize the CIO he was 56 years old—26 beyond the point of no return.

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Committee and Labor's Non-Partisan League—the CIO's political arm—though just a few years later he would denounce him (and Dubinsky) in speeches with anti-Semitic overtones.

He encouraged the appointment of young radicals—Communists, Socialists, Trotskyists, Lovestoneites—as organizers for the CIO and its affiliates.

He turned the radicals loose, and they, with their ideological ardor and skills sharpened by street corner agitation, helped turn the country upside down. The young radicals never were so important as they fancied themselves, but they did more than their share.[2]

By December 1937, just two years after its founding, the CIO had organized 400,000 auto workers, 375,000 steel workers, 100,000 packing and cannery workers, 80,000 rubber workers. It had made inroads into textiles, and the already established affiliates in clothing and mining had grown dramatically.

For the first time in American history, large numbers of Negroes had been brought into unions as the CIO insistently organized across racial lines and guaranteed black workers that they would share equally with whites in the gains won.

Moreover, the AFL, reacting defensively, awoke from its lethargy and began organizing campaigns that led to the greatest membership growth in its history. Actually, the CIO spent most of its energy and money in steel and textile, but Lewis's power as a negotiator, agitator, and leader made his intervention in rubber, auto, and elsewhere critical. Yet, Lewis held the Miners' Union in an undemocratic vise. He appointed the Union's district presidents. Prior to his reign, they had always been elected. He appointed delegates to conventions, signed agreements without approval of the membership. In general, he treated the Miners' Union as his own personal property, in a highly arbitrary style.

As a young organizer for the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, I saw him close up only a few times. I was intimidated. He looked, talked, acted like a Shakespearean king. So huge were his chest and head that he seemed almost deformed. His shoulders and arms were thick and powerful. His hats seemed never to touch his head, riding instead on top and center of a great mane of chestnut hair. From the interior, as from a deep mine, came a resounding voice which, even as he whispered, filled large meeting halls.

I remember a steelworkers' meeting in Chicago where he spoke of Tom Girdler, president of Republic Steel and leader of Little Steel's bloody resistance to the CIO. In the 1937 Memorial Day Massacre, 10 steel unionists, trying to picket Girdler's South Chicago Republic Steel plant, were shot dead, 30 were wounded, and 60 seriously injured. Shortly before our meeting, Girdler had been cited by a management group, in apparent endorsement of his acts, as an outstanding example of the "self-made man." Lewis spoke scornfully of the award and of the values of those who made it. He wound up saying (as nearly as I recall), "He is the personification of the Horatio Alger myth—hero to the editors and to the moguls—whereas in my mind the name Girdler will always be synonymous with that terrible word *Murder*." The final words were spoken in a hoarse whisper. The audience was stunned. Men wept.

The Little Steel strike and the Memorial Day Massacre led to Lewis's break with

[2] Lewis seemed to feel a perverse kinship with rebels of all kinds. He took them in, worked with them, let them run. He was among the earliest supporter of Saul Alinsky's community organizing campaigns. The two were very close personally. Alinsky wrote an admiring biography of John L., and more recently a touching eulogy in *The Nation*.

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Franklin D. Roosevelt and his resignation as President of the CIO. Asked to comment on the strike, Roosevelt called down "a plague on both houses." Lewis responded in the now famous words: "It ill behooves one who has supped at labor's table and who has been sheltered in labor's house to damn with equal fervor and fine impartiality labor and its adversaries when they are locked in mortal embrace."

Lewis later endorsed Wendell Wilkie and said that Roosevelt's election "would be a national evil of the first magnitude." If FDR were elected, he proclaimed in a national broadcast, he would regard it as a repudiation of his own leadership and would resign the presidency of the CIO. Lewis resigned, but not without quietly accepting an abortive effort to organize a "spontaneous draft-Lewis movement" at the CIO convention where Philip Murray was elected. Within a few months he was sniping at Murray, his hand-picked successor. Shortly thereafter he took a walk with his miners—left the CIO, the house he had labored to build.

SO HE CAME AND WENT. But in the five short years of his leadership, the CIO, changed the face of the nation.

What drove John L. Lewis? Certainly not a belief in the need for social change. He was a life-long Republican supporter of free enterprise. He had even endorsed Hoover against FDR in 1932. Only in that year did he abandon the AFL's policy of voluntarism in order to work for unemployment compensation.

He obviously wasn't looking for wealth or position. He could have had both, but—while he always lived comfortably, even luxuriously—he did not enrich himself. And he turned down Coolidge's offer of a cabinet post as Secretary of Labor.

Perhaps if he had been born in a city, to a different father, he might have become a captain of industry or a military leader. But he was the son of a rebellious miner, Tom Lewis, who had been black-listed for 15 years because of his efforts in behalf of a Knights of Labor organizing campaign in the mines of Lucas County, Iowa.

At 15, Lewis began working an eleven-hour shift in the mines. Later he dug coal and copper in Colorado, in Wyoming, Montana, and other states as he traveled around the West. He was apparently marked forever by his experience as a young volunteer in a rescue crew at the Union Pacific Mine in Hannah, Wyoming, where 230 miners lost their lives in one of history's worst mine disasters.

Lewis's father and most men who worked with him in the Lucas County mines were Welshmen. Many had been driven here after 1875 when the Welsh miners' union was smashed. They came as reluctant and bitter exiles and swiftly transferred their grievances to their new employers.

"We hereby warn you the . . . last time. We are determined to draw the hearts out of all the men above named, and fix two hearts upon the horns of the Bull, so that everyone may see what is the fate of every traitor . . . So we testify with our blood." This warning to strike-breakers was tacked to the shaft of a Welsh mine (according to Irving Bernstein in *The Lean Years*), so deep were the wounds and the hatred of the Welsh miner.

John L. Lewis also testified with his blood. Whatever his social philosophy, however ruthless his methods, he was bound by blood ties to the miner and through him to all workingmen.

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Irving Howe

The Agony of the Campus

THIS IS a good time to remember what we owe the students. Owe, not to one or another group and certainly not to the "actions" of last year, but to the fresh and undogmatic young people who in 1963–64 began to assault the injustices of American society.

There were striking moments: busloads of youth heading South to help voter-registration drives, the early teach-ins stirring opposition to the war, the later involvement, at once practical and idealistic, in the McCarthy campaign. At such moments—they seem painfully distant right now—we could glimpse the potential of an aroused generation. The students cast off the cheap tokens of careerism; they shook their teachers out of apathy and made them pay attention to the dangers of a militarized university; they even led their parents to hope that the aborted dreams of *their* youth might yet be realized.

By now, it's mostly gone bad. Though only a part, and far from the best part, of the campus turmoil, the New Left has grown stronger; but it has also become entangled with musty authoritarian dogmas and a nasty cult of violence.

Is there an iron law that makes this decline from idealism to sectarianism inevitable? Must history, especially "our" history, repeat itself?

Seen from an international perspective, it does look as if the changes between 1963 and 1969 had an internal momentum of their own; as if throughout the world there were some fatal tropism to repeat the disasters, the foolishness, the corruptions of the recent past. Yet there are also reasons for the decline that seem special to the U.S.

It is American liberalism, and with it the labor movement, that must bear some of the responsibility for what has happened. Not all the responsibility, but some. If liberalism had been aggressive and independent in the sixties, even to the extent it had been in the thirties, we would not be facing now the shambles on the campus that we do. You need only compare the electrifying impact of a John L. Lewis with the stupefying impact of a George Meany to understand why no segment of American students finds its moral yearnings and political needs satisfied by the unions.

I will be told that conditions have changed, things cannot be as in the thirties—and that is true. But for a liberal leadership both insurgent and sensitive, the challenge of the sixties could have yielded enormous opportunities. For a labor movement warmly responsive to the poor and the blacks, ready to assert an independent course against militarism and the war, there would have been major possibilities for gaining the friendship of the young. And let no one delude himself: that friendship is worth something, both politically and morally.

Today, when some liberal and labor leaders point, accurately enough, to the destructiveness of recent campus events, one feels impelled to reply:

> *Yes, of course, but look also to yourselves. Look to the role you played at the Bay of Pigs, look to the monotone of AFL–CIO support for the war, look to the shamefulness of the Chicago Democratic convention and the way Hubert Humphrey was chosen. If the kids have turned to the false prophets of left authoritarianism, it is partly because you abandoned them. You gave them no vision of militant idealism as a way of fighting the evils they correctly rebelled against. And if you want to know what might have been,*

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you need only imagine the support the students gave McCarthy multiplied a hundred times and set into motion behind a united and vigorous left-liberalism. Imagine what that might have done for this country!

II

THE PRESENT CAMPUS TURMOIL is far more extensive than anything we have ever known in this country. Earlier notions that it was the work of a tiny minority skillful at publicity and provocation should simply be dropped. More important than SDS (which nevertheless is larger and reaches into more schools than all the student groups of the thirties) is the fact that major segments of student bodies can be activated for such desirable ends as abolishing ROTC, protesting university involvement with military research, and demonstrating against the Vietnam war. The ideology of one or another student group may be of interest only to the sequestered ranks of the American left; but the political mood of the students as a generation is a fact of major political importance.

III

THE SDS HAS SPLIT. Whether the breakup will carry over into local campuses we do not yet know; but what seems clear, and depressing, is that a once-promising student movement has sealed its eventual doom at the moment of its greatest strength. Again, seemingly, the fatal rhythm of American radicalism: a fresh idealistic start, rapid growth, an abandonment to factional convolutions and absurdities, and then a surrender to authoritarian ideology.

Greg Calvert, former SDS National Secretary, writes in a recent *Liberation* that he has not been able to attend an SDS meeting for the past year, so revolted has he been by what he himself calls "the Stalinization of the Left." Staughton Lynd, polemicizing against SDS, writes: "I am ashamed of a movement which calls policemen pigs. I don't want to belong to it. Similarly, I feel deeply troubled by the attitude that, since we are right, we can take away civil liberties from others which we insist on for ourselves."

By all accounts the SDS convention in Chicago this summer was a bizarre event, putting to shame even the early Communist sects in the twenties. Two organized factions —one Maoist and the other vaguely Castroite—shout mass slogans at each other, or merely the name of patron saints: Mao Mao Mao and Ho Ho Ho. Overwhelmed by this mutual illumination, they proceed to split, each group denouncing the other as "counter-revolutionary" and "racist." Where did they learn these charming methods?

I remember a meeting arranged in the early sixties between the then leaders of SDS and some DISSENT editors. We had read the Port Huron statement and been impressed; but alas, the hoped-for link between radical generations did not occur. Whose fault? Perhaps both. We weren't flexible enough in responding to their rhetoric, they not interested in our experiences that made us uneasy before signs of infatuation with charismatic dictators. Some of the SDS people struck us as admirable; others, like Tom Hayden, the most gifted of the group, already had the bearing of the *apparatchik* about them, speaking of "participatory democracy" but inducing doubt as to how long they'd remain attached to the more commonplace versions of democracy. Still, the differences then were not a fraction of what they have since become.

With its Chicago split, SDS has taken a giant step down the path of earlier American radicalism: the politics of cannibalism, with one split preparing another. The National Office or anti-Maoist group is held together mainly by common antipathy to the PL Maoists; now that the latter are out of the way, the former may discover the range of its internal differences.*

* This very process, the summer interval notwithstanding, seems already to have begun. The *Guardian*, the Guevarist weekly sympathetic to SDS, reports in its July issues a series of further factional battles, including a fairly serious physical

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On many campuses, however, SDS—or two groups calling themselves SDS—remains a significant force. In some places the two factions will consume themselves through bitter disputation; in others, they will compete in proving who can be more "revolutionary"; in still others, the local SDS chapter will continue pretty much as in the past, without much concern for the national organization. But anyone who thinks the split removes the political-social phenomenon dramatized by SDS is deluding himself. The alienation of the young runs deep, and much of it is justified. There will not soon be peace on campus.

IV

A MAJOR CRITERION for evaluating campus activities must be their off-campus consequences. Right now student militancy has become a significant force, or symbol, in American politics; every cheap-jack politician of the right sees in campus disturbance an opportunity to gain advantage among the voters. Absolute proof may be hard to come by, but it seems reasonable to suggest that confrontation politics on the campus contributed notably to the victories of backlash candidates in Los Angeles and Minneapolis, perhaps also in the New York primaries.

This is a fact which seems unable to penetrate the mind of Dr. Benjamin Spock. He writes letters to newspapers gleefully noting that confrontation tactics lead to academic reforms, arguing, it should be noted, in terms of effective tactics, not intractable conscience. His judgment suffers from at least one delusion and two errors:

Delusion: *that there is an automatic rightness in every demand raised by students, so that if a proposal, say, for a segregated black studies program is called a reform, then it is indeed a reform.*

Errors: *that if certain demands of militant students are granted, this constitutes a political victory—without regard to the possibility that thereby we may have created on the campus conditions that later will be damaging to freedom;*

that if certain demands of militant students are granted, there are not going to follow off-campus repercussions that outweigh in disaster the supposed gains made on the campus.

Politics is, among other things, the art of anticipating consequences, and even trying to anticipate unfamiliar consequences. If the recent events at San Francisco State and Berkeley have strengthened the hand of Ronald Reagan (and the polls show his popularity in California to be at an all-time high), then might it not be argued that this is too high a price to pay for campus "victories"? The black studies program at San Francisco State, such as it is, may have been purchased at the cost of subjecting the poor blacks of Watts to four more years of Reagan: does that strike Dr. Spock as a fair exchange?

V

SOCIALISTS—OTHERS TOO—have no choice, I think, but to work for *a liberal course* for the U.S. in the coming period. That signifies:

- *the premise that we are not and will not soon be in a "revolutionary situation";*
- *the subpremise that if "revolutionary activity" in the next few years comes to more than loud talk, it will have an elitist, desperado and adventurist character;*
- *the belief that it is in our interest to preserve and improve the present agencies of democratic politics, marred as they may be, requiring changes as they do, and even liable to sudden collapse as they are;*
- *the prognosis that the necessary social and economic reforms can be achieved only through a reactivated coalition of left-liberal-labor forces, though one that would be different in political stress and internal*

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one in New York between PL and National Office groups. The University of Wisconsin SDS has voted not to support either tendency, and according to the *Guardian* there are other such "rank-and-file" rumblings.

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composition from the coalition we have just seen disintegrating.

I take these statements to be self-evident, and what is more important, I would claim that many of those who attack DISSENT from the "left" actually work from not very different premises. That the realization of this political perspective would not bring socialism and that it is therefore necessary to keep asserting the idea of socialism, is self-evident; but socialism is not, alas, an immediate possibility or issue in American politics. Major social reforms, however, are on the immediate agenda.

Behind these remarks lies the assumption that in the U.S. today liberal values and institutions are in some jeopardy, both from left authoritarians on the campus and, from the far more powerful forces of the right, on and off campus. It is troubling that some of the militant students either take for granted the survival of democratic institutions, or have little sense of how inherently fragile they are, or worst of all, don't believe that in their present form they are worth preserving.

They are wrong, utterly and profoundly wrong. The backlash that has developed thus far is relatively "moderate" and conceived by its spokesmen and supporters as "defensive"; but it has the potential for becoming something far uglier. Democratic institutions need to be defended; their preservation is the absolute condition for the major reforms the country needs.

In campus situations where, in the name of real or alleged reforms, liberal procedures are threatened, either by quasi-insurrectionary methods or a "plebiscitary democracy," we must continue to insist—whether or not it makes us popular—that democracy is impossible without agreed-upon rules (including rules for changing the rules) and that the destruction of such procedures is likely to come at too great a price. If this be called "legalism," then I simply shrug my shoulders and reflect upon the persistence of foolishness in human affairs.

VI

TO WHICH we must add some qualifications:

In speaking about democracy on the campus, it is sometimes said that universities are not "really" democratic. Almost always such remarks point to failures to realize proclaimed democratic values, or to areas in which democratic procedures have not been sufficiently extended, or to areas in which there can be legitimate uncertainty, even disagreement, as to the relevance or applicability of democratic procedures. A few discriminations:

- *If by democracy on the campus we mean the right of students and professors to express and organize in behalf of their political views, then without doubt the American university provides the most liberal and tolerant arena in the whole of our society.*

- *If by democracy on the campus we mean the right of teachers and students to share in university governance, then the situation is very uneven, rather good in some schools and very bad in others. Here reforms are in order, though there may be honest disagreement among radical and liberal professors and students as to which reforms make sense and which do not. In principle, for example, it is desirable to question the powers of boards of trustees. In practice, because of financial and other pressures, it may be necessary to put up with such institutions, while trying to steadily whittle down their powers. But surely on issues of this kind it ought to be possible to make significant changes without either confrontation politics or the ricochet of backlash. Nevertheless, it ought in fairness to be said that student agitation has done a good deal to rouse faculties that had not shown much interest in the rights that ought to be theirs.*

- *If by democracy on the campus we mean the right of students to have equal powers in making tenure decisions and curriculum determination, as well as in deciding the procedures and subject-matter of particular classes, then once more men of good will and democratic inclination can have serious disagreements. Without getting into nettlesome details, I would say that insofar as*

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students are members of a community (the university), they should have rights of consultation and should share in the making of decisions—though obviously the university is not a place where one man, one vote is a relevant standard. But insofar as students are learners or apprentices, they submit themselves to the guidance and supervision of those who have mastered the discipline.

To say this is not at all to imply that even as learners and apprentices they have no rights of free speech, etc.; for they surely do. It is to suggest, however, that in the learning situation, majority votes are not, as a rule, decisive. Among other things, teaching means that men who know transmit, pass on, communicate their knowledge to those who do not. This signifies that teachers thereby have a measure of authority, which is of course sharply different from unchecked power. The exercise of legitimate (which must always mean, limited) authority is not necessarily authoritarian. Some students believe that it is; and here, I would guess, we will come to a clash in the university that in a decade or two will be more fundamental than those now taking place.

VII

BARRING A SUDDEN END to the war *and* major domestic reforms, student unrest seems likely to grow. The positive aspect of this will be that thousands of young people will enter American society determined to put an end to poverty, discrimination, injustice. With a proper joining of circumstances, this could lead to tremendous social gains. The negative aspect is the likelihood, meanwhile, that the kamikaze-style politics of the desperado-totalitarian left will also flourish. In Germany a new student group, the APO, with several thousand members, openly preaches arson, violence, individual harassment, and terror: its declarations sound as if composed by Peter Verhovensky in the pages of *The Possessed*. Is it not possible, or even likely, that some elements in SDS will be driven by a mixture of success and desperation toward similar views? (It is the dilemma of SDS politics that its kind of success must often lead to desperation.) Once social movements achieve some momentum, they must, so to say, act out their destiny. And one factor likely to speed this development is the readiness of black student groups to use violence, thereby prompting white radical students to escalate their methods of struggle as a way of establishing their "revolutionary credentials."

The politics of Bakunin and Nechaev sprang up in the most backward country of nineteenth-century Europe; they may now be fulfilled in the most advanced country of the twentieth century.

VIII

IT WOULD BE FOOLISH, at this point, to pretend that we have a unified explanation for the character and magnitude of student revolt. The two greatest mistakes are, taking at face value everything the students say about themselves and refusing to accept anything the students say about themselves. The familiar "sympathetic" explanations contain some truth: revolt against bureaucratism, revulsion against the Vietnam war, guilt over draft exemption, concern with poverty, etc. So do the "hostile" explanations: boredom among middle-class youth, purposelessness among those in "soft" disciplines like sociology and literature, delusions as to charismatic dictators in the Third World, abandonment of liberal norms, etc. But when you have so many explanations, then in truth you are still in a preliminary stage of analysis and are still sorting out the relative weights to assign to the various explanations.

Yet there is one aspect of student unrest that ought to be grasped more clearly than it has been by people outside the university. Together with the idealism and despair, there is a growing current of irrationalism and anti-intellectualism. There seems to be some line of continuity between the antihistoricism of the mindlessly contented students of the fifties and the antihistoricism of the passionately discontented students of the sixties. Since the phenomenon is worldwide (see, for

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a brilliant quasi-satirical portrait, Godard's *La Chinoise*), distinctively American factors of explanation cannot be sufficient. I think we are experiencing a worldwide cultural revolt against the modernist tradition, with its stress on complexity, irony, ambivalence and the problematical, to which is linked a worldwide revulsion not merely against the industrial-bureaucratic state but the idea of technique itself. The signs of a romantic primitivism are everywhere on the campus, and even those who cannot accept the deeper implications of this trend must admit that some of its external tokens are attractive. I think we are also witnessing, in some strange and inverted way, a quasi-religious impulse which through secular nihilism and alienated idealism seeks to break into a condition of religious transcendence. My own view is that the desire to achieve religious states of being through nonreligious, and especially political, agencies is full of serious dangers, both to religion and society; but let that rest for another occasion.

One immediate consequence on campus of this melange of styles and impulses is sometimes a revolt against knowledge as such. A few months ago I spoke at a university in California before an audience of graduate students, and for two hours I found myself arguing with them—graduate students, mind you—as to whether scholarship had a place in the university! Nor is this an atypical experience. That is why people outside the university ought to be a little cautious in rushing to support everything that a fraction of students or teachers (among whom, by the way, anti-intellectualism is also spreading) declares to be an "academic reform." One of the leading philosophy departments in the country recently voted to drop the foreign language requirement for its Ph.D. candidates. Is this move a "reform" or an act of panicky submission to current student moods? It will be said, of course, that traditional foreign language requirements for the Ph.D. have been mainly ritualistic and thereby in need of change; which may well be true, but should hardly lead serious academics to conclude that a Ph.D. candidate *in philosophy* need not be required to know one foreign language.

IX

WE FACE EXTREMELY GRAVE, perhaps insoluble, difficulties on the campus, and for those of us who believe both in social change and democratic values these difficulties will be especially severe:

- *Much recent behavior of insurgent students goes against the grain. Destroying computers, burning buildings, breaking up meetings, shouting down teachers in classrooms, carrying guns—this has nothing to do with the socialist, or radical, tradition. It is a strange mixture of Guevarist fantasia, residual Stalinism, anarchist braggadocio, and homemade tough-guy methods. This is not the path for serious radicals.*

- *Nor are our objections merely tactical. The kind of "revolution" envisaged by both SDS factions has nothing to do with the large-scale social transformation this country needs. Who, with a reasonable impulse to self-preservation, would care to test out the dispensation of a Tom Hayden or Mark Rudd? Worthy fellows, no doubt; but better powerless.*

- *Our major campus perspective should be to help, whenever we can, the more "moderate" (which these days means liberal-left and radical) students to establish themselves as an independent force. People like ourselves must therefore try to help—not "lead"—like-minded students. Such students are there, and in rather large numbers; what they lack is self-confidence and organizational coherence.*

- *In many universities, faculties have become politicized—at Harvard there now exists the equivalent of a two-party system within the faculty. If by no means an unmixed blessing, this is an undeniable fact; and in any case, for some time ahead we may have no choice. This means the creation of loosely-knit liberal-left blocs of teachers who simultaneously push for genuine reforms (removal of ROTC, no "classified re-*

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search" on campus, consultative and participatory rights for students) while firmly resisting violence, disruption, and terrorism.

X

DO WE WANT the university to survive? the university as it is, with all its faults and contaminations?

My own answer is, yes, we want it to survive. Improved, transformed, cleansed—but a university and neither a prep school for militarism nor a training center for guerrilla warfare; a university that serves as a haven for free thought and disinterested (which doesn't mean unimpassioned) scholarship.

A formula: The ideal university would not be subservient to the surrounding society, it would exist solely for the life of the mind and the transmission of knowledge. No university fully satisfies this ideal. None can, either in this or any other society, and perhaps none will in any foreseeable society. The pressures of the containing world cannot, under the best of circumstances, be avoided entirely; but they can be sharply minimized.

The university may be *like* the surrounding society, and one can—indeed, should—legitimately complain that it is too much *like* the surrounding society. But insofar as it is a university at all, it is not *the same as* the surrounding society in its nature, its quality, its ends. If some of our students who have seen the Marxist light were to read basic Marxist texts, they would learn about the autonomy—incomplete but significant—that some institutions can achieve within "the superstructure" of a class society. That autonomy—incomplete but significant—has not been gained easily; it is inherently fragile and open to destruction; and we propose to defend it both against those administrators and faculties who would tie the university to the war machine and those students and professors who would like to transform it into an agency of their political will.

About this matter students have often been confused, and sometimes disingenuous. (So too have those administrators and professors who see nothing wrong with military research or other contaminating involvements but who, when confronted by student protest, suddenly start mumbling about the autonomy of the campus. If professors really cared strongly enough about university autonomy to promote it on their own, a great part of the energies that now go into campus "confrontation" would be disarmed in advance. As it is, the cry of autonomy is too often used as a shield for indifference.) Students must decide: toward which idea of the university do they wish to move? You cannot behave on the campus as if it were merely a carbon-copy of the external society and then claim the idea of a disinterested and autonomous university as your defense against retaliation. You cannot bring guns onto campus and then grow sincerely indignant when the police are called in. Only insofar as protesters live up to the standards of the university as sanctuary and enclave, can they legitimately and persuasively demand that the other side do likewise. Once you violate those standards fundamentally, you are either engaged in a form of civil disobedience—which, seriously undertaken and warranting serious respect, implies nonviolence and a readiness to accept legal penalties—or in a version of insurrection—which means that you must expect your experiment in force to be met with the crushing reply of force.

Here we must face a frequent student rebuttal: "The university is not really autonomous, you only talk as if it were, that is mere ideological decoration; the campus is caught up with the war machine, it serves imperialism, etc. etc." This view breaks down into at least two versions: a) that because we live in a capitalist society, the university *cannot* be significantly autonomous, and b) that universities have been allowed by sleepy professors and calloused administrators to drift far from their original or proclaimed purposes and are now seriously contaminated.

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The first of these views seems to me not worth taking seriously: it is quatsch-Marxism, an insult to Marx, and of a piece with the argument that democracy isn't real either, because we live under capitalism. The second deserves much more serious consideration, particularly in certain universities. And here I think we must ask our students, and ourselves, whether the American universities are so badly distorted that they no longer serve any educational uses of a significant kind, whether in consequence these universities are worth teaching and studying in, and whether they can be seriously improved short of changing the entire society. (I leave aside the fact that many of those who now speak about changing the entire society have no idea of the university that is worthy of respect and often defend uncritically societies such as Cuba and China where universities are far less autonomous and open to critical thought than the worst of the American ones.)

I believe that the university as we know it remains valuable, first as a repository of learning available to rebels as well as conformists, and probably more useful to rebels than conformists; second, as an agency which increasingly enables plebeian youth to transform its social and cultural condition; third, as a relatively or partially autonomous institution which reflects decades of struggle, both by disinterested teachers within and insurgent movements without, to make education available to all classes. That struggle is far from won, but it would be wanton to dismiss what has been achieved.

XI

WHEN THE ISSUE ARISES of whether to call the police onto campus, it clearly signifies that an earlier political battle has been lost. It is important to say this; but not enough. Politically, tactically, humanely, universities should hold off as long as they can, and then a bit longer, before calling the police; the experience of most schools where the police have been called indicates that doing so was a mistake. In the coming period we may even have to accustom ourselves to a kind of "dual power" on campus, with a building or two "taken over" by SDS and the remainder of the university going about its business. At times, that may be preferable to handing the SDS the kind of confrontation on which it thrives. But we must also have the courage to declare that once student protest enters the stage of disruption and violence, once it flouts the rights of other students and teachers, we cannot say that under no conditions would we favor calling the police. It is not a happy choice. Sit-ins and even certain kinds of occupations are better than "busts," especially if the university is not totally disrupted and no effort is made forcibly to prevent others from performing their usual academic duties; yet to forgo in advance the resort to authority is to give a free hand to those who would impose the will of a minority through violence and intimidation.

XII

THE SOLUTION to campus problems rests mainly outside the campus. Most students one encounters—greatly troubled, sympathetic with some protest demands, strongly inclined to close ranks against punitive adult authority—remain vaguely committed to liberal values and radical reforms. Valuable energy lies unused here, and all that is needed is an adult movement the young can respect.

That movement, however, isn't likely to appear in the next year or two, and those of us on campus will have to bear the consequences. It will be a test of integrity and fortitude: to succumb neither to fellow-traveling with "the young" nor backlash, but to persist in our devotion to rational discourse, democratic procedures, and radical change.

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Michael Walzer

Corporate Authority and Civil Disobedience

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE is generally described as a nonrevolutionary encounter with the state. A man breaks the law, but does so in ways that do not challenge the legitimacy of the legal or political systems. He feels morally bound to disobey; he also recognizes the moral value of the state; civil disobedience is his way of maneuvering between these conflicting moralities. The precise requirements of civility have been specified by a number of writers, and while the specifications vary, they tend to impose a similar discipline on the disobedient persons. Above all, they impose the discipline of nonviolence. Civility, it is generally said, requires first the adoption of methods that do not directly coerce or oppress other members of society and, second, it requires nonresistance to state officials enforcing the law. I want to argue that there is a kind of disobedience that does not meet either of these requirements, and yet sometimes falls within the range of civility.

Perhaps the actions I am going to describe should not be called civil disobedience at all; I don't want to quarrel about names. But it is arguable, I think, that narrow definitions of civil disobedience rule out certain sorts of unconventional yet nonrevolutionary politics which should not be regarded as attacks on civil order. These may well involve both coercion and violence, though always in severely limited ways. It is important to recognize the significance of such limits when making judgments about civility. The insistence on the absolute nonviolence of civil disobedience is, in any case, a little disingenuous, since it disregards, first, the coercive impact disobedience often has on innocent bystanders and, second, the actual violence it provokes and sometimes is intended to provoke, especially from the police. I don't doubt that it is preferable that no one be coerced and that police violence be met with passive resistance, but there may be occasions when neither of these is politically possible, and there may also be occasions, not necessarily the same ones, when they are not morally required. Such occasions, if they exist, would have to be described and delimited precisely. One of the dangers of a narrow definition of civil disobedience is that it simply rules out the effort to do this. By setting rigid limits to civil conduct, it virtually invites militants of various sorts to move beyond the bounds of civility altogether—and it invites the police to respond always as if they were confronting criminals. (Sometimes, of course, the police are confronting criminals, but it is important that we know, and that they know, when this is so and when not.)

The limits of civility are a matter of academic interest in more than the usual sense just now, and I do want to speak to the problems of student radicalism. But my more immediate focus will be on the past—for the sake of clarity and dispassion. There are historical cases in which the coercion of innocent bystanders and resistance to police authority have in fact proven com-

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patible, or so it seems to me, with a kind of civility. The sit-down strikes against General Motors in 1936–37 provide a classic example, to which I will later refer in some detail. For now it is enough to indicate the general principles under which such cases may be justified. They *may* be justified when the initial disobedience is directed against corporate bodies other than the state; when the encounter with these corporations, though not with the state that protects them, is revolutionary or quasi-revolutionary in character; and when the revolution is made in good faith. I'll suggest later on just what these principles involve, and I'll also argue very briefly that some (at least) of the recent student sit-ins, though they have been defended by reference to the 1936 strikes, cannot be justified in the same way.

AMERICANS TODAY probably have a greater number of direct contacts with state officials than ever before. We continue, however, to have many contacts, perhaps more, that are mediated by corporate bodies. These corporations collect taxes on behalf of the state, maintain standards required by the state, spend state money and, above all, enforce a great variety of rules and regulations with the silent acquiescence and ultimate support of the state. Commercial, industrial, professional, and educational organizations and, to a lesser degree, religious organizations and trade unions, all play these parts—and yet very few of these reproduce the democratic politics of the state. They have official or semiofficial functions; they are enormously active and powerful in the day-to-day government of society, but the authority of their officers is rarely legitimized in any democratic fashion. These officers preside over what are essentially authoritarian regimes, with no internal electoral system, no opposition parties, no free press or open communications network, no established judicial procedures, no channels for rank-and-file participation in decision-making.[1] When the state acts to protect their authority, it does so through the property system, that is, it recognizes the corporation as the private property of some determinate group of men, and it protects their right to do, within legal limits, what they please with their property. When corporate officials defend themselves, they often invoke functional arguments. They claim that the parts they play in society can only be played by such men as they, with their legally confirmed power, their control of resources, their freedom from internal challenge, and their ability to call on the police.[2]

Neither of these arguments justifies or requires absolute power, and some of the subjects of corporate authority have managed to win rights against it, rights that generally come to them as citizens and are also protected by the state. I am thinking of such things as the right to work no more than a specified number of hours, the right to work in at least minimally safe surroundings, and so on. The right to strike is of the same sort, though it was for a longer time unprotected. The claim of workers to shut down a factory they did not own was once widely regarded as a denial of property rights and a threat to the efficient running of the economy. For years the strike was the most common form of working-class civil disobedience, but it has long since been allowed by the state. I

[1] The list is adapted from Robert Pranger, *The Eclipse of Citizenship: Power and Participation in Contemporary Politics* (New York, 1968); see especially pp. 73–76. See also the excellent discussion in Grant McConnell, *Private Power and American Democracy* (New York, 1966), Chapter 5. I should say at this point that I am not considering public corporations and civil services in this essay, though their employees may also be deprived of the benefits of internal democracy. Many of the arguments that I make later on may well apply to them, but their special position vis-à-vis a democratic government raises problems I cannot cope with here.

[2] These are the implicit assumptions, for example, of Peter Drucker's *The Concept of the Corporation* (New York, 1946). In Chapter 3, Drucker describes the suggestion box as a crucial channel for worker participation in corporate management.

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should note that the right of students to strike is not similarly allowed, since students cannot, so far as I know, claim state protection against expulsion after an unsuccessful strike. In any case, such rights, even if securely held, would still not be comparable to the rights a citizen has in a democratic state, and just how far they can or ought to be extended remains unclear, a matter of continuing public debate. By and large, the subjects of corporate authority are . . . subjects, and state citizenship does not generate corporate citizenship even when it guards against the worst forms of corporate tyranny.

There is one argument in support of this subjection that at least falls within the realm of democratic theory. This is the argument from tacit consent, which holds that corporate subjects are, in some morally significant sense, voluntarily subjects. By their willing entry into, and acceptance of the jurisdiction of, one or another corporate body, they commit themselves, on this view, to obey rules and regulations they have no part in making. They join the firm, go to work in the factory, enter the university, knowing in advance the nondemocratic character of all these organizations, knowing also who runs them and for what purposes. They are not deceived, at least no one is trying to deceive them, and so they are morally bound for the duration of their stay. And however subject they may be during that time to authoritarian pettiness and to oppressive rules and regulations, they are never the captives of the authorities. Their citizenship guarantees their ultimate recourse: if they don't like it where they are, they can leave.

This is a serious argument and deserves some attention. Residence in a democratic state does, I think, generate a *prima facie* obligation to obey the laws of that state—in part because of the benefits that are necessarily accepted along with residence, in part because of the expectations aroused among one's fellow residents, and finally because of the universality of obligation in a democracy, from which no resident can easily exclude himself. But the effects of residence in a nondemocratic state are surely very different. There the right of resistance and revolution may well be widely shared, and there is no reason why a new resident should not associate himself with the rebels rather than with the authorities. It is not obvious that the same distinction applies to the corporation, since the strict forms of political democracy are often said to be impractical in corporate bodies organized for industrial or educational purposes. But this is precisely what is at issue in most cases of corporate disobedience, and I see no reason to prejudge the issue by agreeing that tacit consent to nondemocratic corporations establishes any greater degree of obligation than tacit consent to nondemocratic states. In any case, arguments about the possible reaches of democracy are carried on almost continuously within both the corporation and the state; surely no one can bind himself not to join them; and it is one of the characteristics of political arguments in nondemocratic organizations that they will often take "illegal" forms. Such forms may even be necessary if the arguments are to be carried on at all. So there can be no binding commitment not to break corporate rules and regulations or, at least, there can be no binding commitment until the best possible democratic procedure for establishing rules has been adopted.

THERE IS another reason for rejecting the argument from tacit consent: corporate bodies do not offer anything like the same range of benefits that the state provides. Membership in them in no sense replaces citizenship in the state. A man may well provide himself with new benefits and even incur powerful, perhaps overriding obligations by joining a corporate body, but he cannot be conceived as having yielded any

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of the legal rights he has as a citizen. Corporate officials may offer him a trade: we will pay you so much money, they may say, if you surrender the right to strike. That agreement, whatever its moral force, is not legally binding so long as the right to strike is recognized by the state. But the legal rights of a citizen are also matters of dispute, and so it is always possible for a corporate subject to break the rules and regulations, appealing to the laws of the state or to the established rights of citizenship as his authority for doing so.[3]

It is when such an appeal is not recognized by state officials that civil disobedience may begin. But for the moment, I want only to suggest that disobedience to corporate rules is probably justified whenever it is undertaken in good faith as part of a struggle for democratization or for socially recognized rights. By the phrase "in good faith," I mean to limit the occasions of justifiable disobedience to cases in which four conditions hold: when the oppressiveness of the corporate authorities can be specified in some rational way; when the social functions of the corporation have been taken into account in judging the rights its participants might enjoy; when concrete proposals for corporate reorganization have been brought forward; and when a serious effort has been made to win massive support for these proposals.

I would assume also that whatever channels for "legal" reform are available within the corporation have been tried. But it is important to stress the fact that such channels don't always exist in the sorts of bodies I am considering here. Indeed, in many of them any serious demand for democratization may plausibly be called revolutionary, for it involves an attack upon the established authority system of the corporation. This was certainly true, for example, of the demands of the labor movement, as one of its historians has noted: "If revolution is defined as a transfer of power from one social group to another, all forms of union activity which involve a challenge to the power of owners and managers are revolutionary." [4]

If this is so, then all the forms of revolutionary politics that we know from the history of authoritarian states may now be reenacted on a smaller stage. In such situations we ought to anticipate this kind of politics and not be shocked or surprised when it comes. Thus the presence of corporate police and spies (as in the auto plants before 1936) and the pervasive atmosphere of fearfulness generated by unlimited power will often impose secrecy and a severe discipline upon the revolutionary organization. At critical moments, initiatives may be seized by small minorities of militants, who claim to represent their fellow subjects but who also force them to make choices they did not anticipate and might well prefer not to make. Those who refuse to join the revolution may be threatened, mocked, perhaps beaten, their right to work systematically denied. Finally, the militants and their new supporters, now embattled and exposed, will often resist corporate countermoves, and may do so even if these countermoves have state support. All this, secrecy, discipline, coercion, and resistance, still falls or may fall, I want to argue, within the limits of civility—so long as the revolution is not aimed at the state itself and so long as the corporate authorities really are as oppressive as the rebels claim.

There is another condition, of course: that the corporate revolution not take the form of a violent coup, an attempt to blow up the central offices of the corporation, or to murder or terrorize its personnel. It is

[3] Perhaps there is a moral as well as a legal basis for such appeals: it can be argued, I think, that in discussing rights and obligations, one can always appeal from less to more democratic bodies. Obviously, this can work against the state as well as in its favor; for some examples, see my "Obligation to Disobey," in David Spitz, editor, *Political Theory and Social Change* (New York, 1967).

[4] Robert Brooks, *When Labor Organizes* (New Haven, 1937), p. 112.

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crucial that violence on this scale, if it occurs, does not occur at the initiative of the rebels. And in fact it rarely does occur at their initiative; in almost all the cases I can think of (there may have been some recent exceptions), the rebels have followed a different course. Their strategy is almost always to shut down the corporation, to curtail its operations or to stop them altogether, until some new distribution of power is worked out. It is important to note that this first shut-down is different from all those that come later. Once the authority and cohesion of the corporate subjects have been recognized, strikes may become a permanent feature of the power system. The simple withdrawal of workers from their routine activities will then be sufficient to close the corporation, and even the threat to strike will be a valuable bargaining point in its ongoing politics. But this was not so earlier, and the first strikes may have to take direct and coercive forms. Generally, they involve the physical occupation of the corporate plant and the expulsion of nonstrikers. Occupation is preferable to withdrawal, because it can be achieved successfully without majority support, and majorities are not readily organized under authoritarian conditions. Occupation is also preferable because it precludes, at least for a time, the effective dismissal of the strikers and the resumption of corporate activity with new subjects. For these reasons, the sit-down or sit-in is the typical form of revolutionary activity in nondemocratic corporations.

The state then comes into the picture not to enforce the laws against assault and murder but to enforce the property laws. This is the paradox of corporate revolution: the revolutionaries encounter the state as trespassers. However serious their attack on corporate authority, they are guilty only of minor crimes in the eyes of the state, though one would not always guess this from the response of state officials. In fact, violence often, perhaps most often, begins with law enforcement.

IN SUGGESTING HOW disobedience to corporate rules and regulations might be justified, I have treated the corporation as a political community within the larger community of the state. I have discussed its government and the rights of its subject population. This is obviously not the way, or not the only way, the officials of the corporation and the state regard the matter. They see the corporation also as a piece of property, protected as property by the law. When corporate officials find "their" buildings occupied, their first response is to call on the police to clear them. The police sometimes come and sometimes do not. They are pledged to enforce the law, but they also take orders from the political leaders of the state, who may (and, I would suggest, ought to) see in the corporate revolution something more than a mere violation of the property laws. What is at issue here is not who owns the corporation, but what such ownership entails and, above all, what, if any, governmental powers it entails. It is one of the characteristic features of feudal regimes that the ownership of property always entails governmental powers (and responsibilities): public functions such as war-making, tax-collecting, and adjudication are dispersed among a class of landlords, and the right to carry out such functions is literally owned along with the land. Clearly no modern state, even more clearly no democratic state, can permit or tolerate such a dispersal of powers. Corporate officials who carry out governmental or quasi-governmental functions (even the simple maintenance of social order within the corporation) must be responsible to the larger community, whose citizens they and their subjects are. But this means that the state has an interest in the internal politics of the corporation, an interest that may or may not be served by police intervention on behalf of private property. It is not far-fetched, I think, to suggest that the interests of a democratic state are best served by corporate democ-

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ratization—at least so long as this process does not seriously interfere with the social functions of the corporation, in which the larger community also has an interest.

It is important, in any case, for state officials to realize that when they enforce the trespass laws against strikers, they are also acting to restore not merely the "law and order" of the state but that of the corporation as well. They are enforcing another set of rules in addition to their own. And while they can argue that the strikers have every right and opportunity to work in public and try to change the first set of rules, they must recognize that the second set can, perhaps, only be changed by the very revolutionary action they are repressing. When police resist efforts to overthrow the state, they are behaving in a perfectly straightforward way. But the case is not straightforward when police resist efforts to overthrow corporate authority. Corporate authority is not the same as the authority of the property laws—it does not have their democratic legitimacy—and the difference between the two may require the police to use some discretion in moving against men who violate the laws of the state solely in order to challenge the authority of the corporation. The corporate rebels may, for example, be defending rights they actually have as citizens. Their violation of the law may be a means of bringing to the attention of their fellow citizens other, more important violations of the law.[5] And then the police must choose the laws they will enforce, and may reasonably choose to do as little as possible for the time being. Police inaction may even be justified if the rebels are wrong, or if the courts hold that they are wrong, about their rights as citizens, for the size and scope of the strike may suggest changing communal values which the political leaders who command the police may choose to respect if only in order to avoid violence.

The rebels may, of course, be wrong in other ways: the militant minority may not have even the silent and fearful sympathy of the others; its demands may be inconsistent with the continued fulfillment of important social functions. But corporate authorities always claim that these two conditions hold, and they have done so in many cases where they clearly didn't. Since the truth is often difficult to discover, especially in the early hours or days of a rebellion, state officials must keep an open mind as long as they can. Police action may be necessary, but it is rarely necessary immediately. It is, however, almost always upon the demand of the corporate authorities that the police act quickly. If there is any hesitation their subjects, they think, will rally around the militants—though it is obviously also possible that they will desert the militants, leaving them helpless and isolated. Time is the best test of the support the strikers actually have among the passive majority but, historically, this has not been a test the authorities are willing to risk. Delay, moreover, pushes them toward negotiations with the strikers, and the beginning of talks is itself a victory for democratization even if no other demands are allowed. Hence any refusal to enforce the law probably constitutes a kind of indirect intervention by the state against the corporation. It would be naive to deny this; I can only suggest that the interests of a democratic state are sometimes served in this way.

If the police do enforce the law, then they must expect that the strikers will respond in the context of their own revolutionary situation. They are not at war with the state but are caught up in a political struggle of the most serious sort; and direct police intervention, whatever its supposedly limited purposes, brings the police into that struggle and into what may appear as the closed circle of its strategic necessities. The more desperate the struggle, the less likely they are to meet with either obedience or

[5] Joel Seidman, *Sit-Down* (League for Industrial Democracy pamphlet, New York, 1937), p. 38.

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a merely passive resistance. Even active resistance in such circumstances, however, does not necessarily constitute an attack upon the law and order that the state represents. It may do so, of course, if state officials are totally committed to the maintenance of corporate authority in its established forms and if their interference on behalf of that authority is not merely occasional but systematic. Clearly there have been governments so committed, and to their officials corporate revolution must look like (and may actually be) revolution *tout court*. But the history of liberal government is a history of retreat from such commitments, retreat from the total support, for example, of church prelates (ecclesiastical authority, and above all the right to collect tithes, was once protected by the property laws), of industrial magnates, and so on. The occasion for such retreats has generally been an act or a series of acts of corporate rebellion which state officials decided they could not or discovered they need not repress.

Continuous repression, if it were possible, would virtually force the rebels to expand their activity and challenge the state directly. And there are always some militants among the rebels who assume that such repression is inevitable. Like the corporate authorities, they see civil order and corporate authority inextricably intertwined. But this is rarely, if ever, the case. Law and order is indeed always law and order of a particular sort; it necessarily has a specific social content. But law and order is also a universal myth; the liberal state is at least potentially a universal organization; and in the name of its myths its leaders can always or almost always dissociate themselves from some particular piece of social oppression. For this reason, corporate rebellion is potentially a limited form of political action and potentially a kind of civil disobedience. The violation of property laws is not in itself an act of revolution against the state, and state officials acknowledge this and confirm it when they give up on such things as collecting tithes or clearing the factories. If they do intend to be civil and hope to be treated civilly, the rebellious subjects of corporate authority must in turn be careful not to make revolutionary claims against the state. Doubtless the occasion calls for a certain rhetorical extravagance, but that can be ignored so long as the actions of the rebels bespeak a concern for the appropriate limits. In general, this is the case: the rebels argue by their very actions that the commitments which they have made to one another (their new-found solidarity) establish an obligation to disobey not all laws but only *these* laws, for example, the trespass laws. They claim for their revolutionary organization not that it replaces the state or is a law unto itself, but only that it wins primacy in this or that limited area of social life. It requires its members to violate state laws *here*, not everywhere, and insofar as it justifies the use of violence against state officials, it does so only if they intervene against the revolution. The justification is local and temporary and does not challenge the general authority of the police to enforce the law. In fact, the rebels will often demand law enforcement—against the corporation—and explicitly pledge themselves to obedience, as they should do, whenever obedience is compatible with corporate democracy.

ALL THESE ARGUMENTS are illustrated by the auto workers' sit-down strikes of 1936–37, and I think the illustration is worth presenting in some detail since so little has been written about this form of civil disobedience. The right of workers to strike has come to be so widely accepted that its illegal and semilegal history and all the philosophical issues raised by that history have been forgotten. The sit-down, moreover, was not only called illegal by the local courts in 1937, it eventually was called illegal by the Supreme Court. And the strike that went so far to establish the right of cor-

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porate subjects to organize and defend themselves remains illegal today. Yet it is not the case that all corporate systems have been democratized, nor do all corporate subjects have the same rights. The questions raised in 1936–37 still have to be answered.

I don't think I need to describe at length the kind of oppression that existed in General Motors plants before the victory of the autoworkers. Corporate officials possessed absolute authority over hiring and firing, the conditions of work, the pace of work, and the rates of pay. They used this power not only to maximize production and profit, but also to maintain the established authority system. In effect, they ran a miniature police state in the factories, and the organization of the workers, their incipient union, took on in response the features of an underground movement.[6] This movement claimed a kind of legality not within the corporation but within the state: its spokesmen insisted that they were acting in accordance with the National Labor Relations Act, which made the encouragement of union organization a matter of public policy, and in defense of those legal rights that workers were said to have in regard to their jobs.[7] But though union workers might argue that their activity was democratically authorized outside the factories, inside it necessarily took revolutionary and sometimes nondemocratic forms.

There can be no doubt that the union enjoyed widespread sympathy among the workers. But union members did not make up anything like a majority at any of the struck plants, and in some of them this was true not only of members but also of supporters. Majority rule does not operate very well in the early stages of the struggle for democracy, when the majority is likely to be both passive and frightened, justifiably anxious for its jobs, and often resentful of militants who don't share that anxiety or repress it in the name of possibly distant goals. Hence the way is always open for vanguard initiatives which are dangerous both practically and morally. Militants who seize the initiative always run the risk of finding themselves alone, deprived not only of effective support but of moral justification. In 1936, the risks paid off; the basis of a democratic movement did in fact exist, though this could not be known, and was not known with any certainty, in advance.

It is important to stress the risks the strikers accepted and had to accept if they were to undertake any political action at all. But it is also important to stress all they did to minimize those risks. A long history of struggle and failure precedes the dramatic victory of 1936. The commitment of the union militants to corporate democracy is best evidenced by their months and years of work in the factories, building support, searching for activists, adjusting their own proposals to meet the interests of the men on the job. A strike might have been attempted without all that. Angry men were never lacking in the auto plants. But there is a kind of legitimacy that can only be won by hard work. Without a disciplined base the civility of the strike would have been precarious at best, and it is not difficult to imagine isolated militants, faced with certain defeat, setting fire to a factory or shooting at the police.

But a successful strike requires not only that the militants find majority support, it also requires that they coerce minorities, and often that they begin to do so before they have demonstrated the extent of their support. This is not a usual feature of civil disobedience against the state, but it has to be

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[6] See Henry Kraus, *The Many and the Few: A Chronicle of the Dynamic Auto Workers* (Los Angeles, 1947), Chapter 1, for an account of what organizing was like before the sit-downs. Kraus was editor of the *Flint Auto Worker,* the local union newspaper, during 1936–37.

[7] Solomon Barkin, "Labor Unions and Workers' Rights in Jobs" in Arthur Kornhauser, *et al.,* editors, *Industrial Conflict* (New York, 1954), p. 127. These claims were eventually rejected by the courts. Cf. Leon Green, "Sit-Down Strikes are Legal," *New Republic,* March 24, 1937.

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remembered that what is going on in the corporation is not civil disobedience at all but revolution. Exactly what this involves can be seen most clearly in the seizure of Chevrolet Plant No. 4, the turning point of the General Motors strike. The union was relatively weak in Plant No. 4, and its seizure required careful planning. Company police were lured away by a demonstration in another factory; several hundred union militants from Plant No. 6 were brought in during a change of shifts; and these men together with union supporters already inside succeeded in forcing the shutdown of No. 4. Before the strikers carried the day, however, there was a time when uncommitted workers were attacked from both sides. Here is the account of a union official:

> A few of the staunchest unionists got into the aisles and began marching around shouting . . . "Strike is on! Come on and help us!" Many of the workers stood waveringly at their posts. . . . And meanwhile the superintendents and foremen . . . tore about, starting the conveyors up again, yelling to the men to "get back to work or you're fired." . . . Some of the men began working again or at least made a desperate effort to do so under the tumultuous circumstances as they were still anxious to differentiate themselves from the strikers. But the ranks of the latter grew inexorably. . . . There was practically no physical violence. The men would merely act fierce and holler threats. There was huge Kenny Malone with wrench in hand tearing down the lines and yelling: "Get off your job, you dirty scab!" Yet he never touched a man. . . .[8]

This is a graphic description of a revolutionary moment, the decisive overthrow of the absolutism of superintendents and foremen, and it is clear, I think, that one can justify the coercion of the "wavering" workers only by reference to that end and to the legitimate expectation that it was widely shared. For the moment, however, the militants could only assume that the end was widely shared, and such assumptions may have to be sustained without proof for some time. In Plant No. 4 the political battle was won, but the moral outcome, so to speak, remained inconclusive:

> The fight was over; the enormous plant was dead. . . . The unionists were in complete control. Everywhere they were speaking to groups of undecided workers. "We want you boys to stay with us. It won't be long and everything will be settled. Then we'll have a union and things will be different." Many of the workers reached their decision (for the union) in this moment. Others went home, undeterred by the strikers. About two thousand remained and an equal number went off.[9]

I don't mean to suggest that *any* degree of coercion of undecided or neutral persons can be defended by reference to the end of corporate democracy. But it is likely that, given the limits I have already sketched, virtually any degree of necessary coercion can be defended. Surely it would be dishonest for those of us who value democracy in corporations as well as in states to pretend that we would judge the GM strike differently if Kenny Malone had actually hit somebody with his wrench—though we are certainly glad (and should be glad) to be told that he didn't. But in discussing violence against state officials, somewhat different standards apply, at least they apply if we believe the state to be so constituted that attempts on its authority are not easily justified. Within the corporation, revolutionary initiatives may well be appropriate; within the larger democratic community, they are inappropriate, and the corporate rebels demonstrate their civility only insofar as they make clear, as the auto workers did, that they intend no such initiatives. During the GM strike, for example, a number of workers were arrested, and the union leaders ordered mass demonstrations in front of the local

[8] Kraus, pp. 214–215.

[9] Kraus, p. 216.

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police station. They thus used against the police legal forms of protest that they had declined to use against the corporation.

On the day after the seizure of Plant No. 4, a Michigan court issued an injunction against the strike, and the strikers began discussing among themselves what they would do if confronted by police or National Guardsmen. There were a few men in the factories and among the union's leaders who urged passive resistance. They thought the workers should allow themselves to be carried out of the factories. But a much larger group favored active resistance, on the pragmatic grounds that there was no working-class tradition of passivity and no religious or ideological foundation for a politics of nonviolence. The spectacle of strikers being carried, limp and unresisting, in the hands of the hated police would have, they argued, a profoundly disillusioning effect on the families of the strikers and on all the men who had so far refused to join the revolution. It would seem a terrible defeat rather than a moral victory, an incongruous and humiliating end to a period of heroic action. This argument carried the day, and the strikers publicly committed themselves to fight back against any effort to use force to clear the factories.[10]

At the same time, they did everything they could do, short of leaving the factories, to avoid such an outcome. They established their own law and order, a strikers' discipline far stricter than that of the foremen; they banned liquor from the occupied plants, worked out informal agreements with the police which permitted workers to come and go and food to be brought in, and carried out all necessary repair and maintenance work on factory machinery.[11] Above all, they repeatedly stressed their willingness to negotiate a settlement. This last is a crucial token of civility. However radical their demands, and even if those demands imply that the corporate authorities ought not to be authorities at all, the rebels can never deny to their opponents the recognition they themselves seek. The call for unconditional surrender may sometimes be appropriate in time of war and civil war, but it is never a political demand, nor is it compatible with civil peace.

The argument in the factories indicates some of the problems of any absolute commitment to nonviolence. Men who live in a democratic state can plausibly be said to be obligated to preserve its peace, to accept the forms of its law and order. But the strikers did not live only in the state. They were members, as all of us are, of overlapping social circles, and within the spheres specific to them—General Motors, the auto industry, the capitalist industrial system generally—they did not enjoy the benefits usually associated with the words law and order. These were worlds of oppression and struggle, in which the mutual forbearance necessary to civil disobedience did not exist. And in those worlds, state police had all too frequently played a role no different from that of company police, implicating themselves in the oppression and compromising their own authority. The point where the two circles overlapped had thus been dominated by the violence of the corporate world. It was only the refusal of Michigan's Governor Frank Murphy to enforce the court injunction—his own civil disobedience—that reestablished the state as a universal organization and a sphere of nonviolence, within which auto workers could conceivably incur serious obligations to the public peace.

Most of the criticisms of the strikers were simply refusals to recognize the pluralism of their lives and the possible pluralism of their commitments. When A. Lawrence Lowell, President-Emeritus of Harvard University, said that the sit-downs constituted "an armed insurrection . . . defiance of law, order, and duly elected authorities," he was

[10] In a letter to Governor Murphy; on the arguments within the union, see Kraus, pp. 220, 231–233.

[11] Seidman, pp. 32–36.

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suggesting that the spheres of corporate and state authority coincided perfectly.[12] I have already argued that this is sometimes true, and when it is civility on the part of corporate rebels it is almost impossible. But it was not true in Michigan in 1937. Governor Murphy, who had only a few months before become a "duly elected authority" with the support of the auto workers, symbolized this fact. His affirmation of the independence of the state recognized that the primary focus of the strike was on General Motors and not on Michigan or the United States, and so ended the threat to civil order. By forcing negotiations between the corporate authorities and the union leadership, he began the long (and as yet incomplete) process of bringing some kind of legitimacy into General Motors. Until that process is well begun, I see no reason to deny the workers the right to use (limited) force within the corporate world, against their oppressors and against any allies their oppressors might call in. But I don't mean to state a general rule; the argument depends upon the specific character of the overlapping social circles.

Even if the police had gone in, the resistance of the workers would not have constituted an "armed insurrection," though it is not difficult to imagine an insurrection growing out of such an encounter. Particular, limited acts of resistance, coupled with appeals to community laws and values, do not necessarily break through the bounds of civil order. There was, in fact, an action of this sort early in the strike, a short, sharp battle between police and strikers (known, among the strikers at least, as the Battle of Bull Run) which took place at the initiative of the police.[13] I don't believe that incidents of this sort detract in any serious way from the double description of the strike that I have attempted to sketch: revolution in the corporate world, civil disobedience in the state. Obviously that dualism breeds difficulty; neither label is precise. Together, I think, they capture something of the social and moral reality of the sit-down.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE has often been divided into two types: direct disobedience, in which state laws thought to be unjust are openly defied; and indirect disobedience, in which state policies thought to be unjust are challenged by the violation of incidental laws, most often trespass laws. I have tried to describe a third type, more indirect than the second, in which the state is not challenged at all, but only those corporate authorities that the state (sometimes) protects. Here the disobedience takes place simultaneously in two different social arenas, the corporation and the state, and in judging that disobedience different criteria must be applied to the two, though I have tried to show that the two sets of criteria are not entirely unrelated. When revolution is justified in the corporation, then certain limited kinds of coercion and violence may be justified against state officials protecting corporate property. I assume a strong presumption against such violence, however, and I would want to justify it only when the oppression of the corporate subjects is palpable and severe and the interference of the police of such a kind that leaves the rebels no alternative but resistance or defeat. At the same time, it seems to me that state officials, recognizing the oppression, ought not to interfere, ought to refrain, that is, from enforcing the property laws, and so avoid even limited violence.

The character of private governments obviously varies a great deal, and so the argument I have developed on the basis of the General Motors strikes will not apply in any neat and precise way to all other sit-downs. The student rebellions of the sixties, for example, are very different from the labor rebellions of the thirties. But I do believe that the same criteria can be used in framing our judgments in these two, and in many

[12] Quoted in J. Raymond Walsh, *C.I.O.: Industrial Unionism in Action* (New York, 1937), p. 182.
[13] Kraus, pp. 125 ff.

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other, cases. This suggests the sort of questions we must ask the student militants: what is the nature of the oppression you experience? have you worked seriously among your fellow students (and among your teachers) to build support for your new politics? do you have, or potentially have, majority support? what are your specific proposals for university reform? and so on. By and large, I think, these questions have not been adequately answered—chiefly for two reasons that I can only mention briefly here. First of all, contemporary universities are very different from the GM plants of 1936 (or even of 1969). However authoritarian their administrations, their students enjoy personal and civil liberties undreamt of in the factories, and these liberties open the way for a great variety of political activities short of sitting-in. And yet, second, contemporary student movements have rarely been able, in fact, they have rarely attempted, to win and hold majority support. Their militants have too often rushed into adventures that cannot hope to win such support, in part because they have nothing to do with corporate democratization, in part because they call into question the very functions of the university the militants profess to value.

It is, nevertheless, not difficult to imagine universities so rigidly authoritarian and student movements so committed as to justify the sorts of politics I have been examining. There have certainly been justified sit-ins during the past several years, sit-ins that actually moved this or that university closer to whatever form of democracy is appropriate to the academic community. There have also been sit-ins justified in part, open at the same time to severe criticism, that resulted or might have resulted in similar movements. The theoretical model I have tried to elaborate permits us, I think, to defend such movements and their necessary methods—but always in a manner that reveals to the participants themselves the nature and limits of their action.

THE PROBLEMS of university government indicate clearly the great importance of arguing about the possibilities of democracy in every institutional order and not only in the state. I don't mean to prejudge these arguments, at any rate, I don't mean to prejudge them absolutely. A government of equals may be possible in one setting; weighted voting, or some such recognition of inequality, may be necessary in another; collective bargaining between employees and managers may be appropriate in a third. The range of political decision-making or of bargaining may have to be limited in this way or that, or it may not be limited at all. There is no single desirable system of internal adjudication. But I think it can be said flatly that some kind of democratic legitimacy is always necessary to corporate authority. Insofar as corporations lack this legitimacy, their very existence breeds revolt, and the more private and autocratic their government is, the more angry, perhaps violent, the revolt will be. If democratic states choose to shelter corporate autocrats, then they must learn to shelter corporate rebels as well. And if rebels are asked, as they should be, to maintain civility, then the authorities must see to it that civility is a genuine option for them, and not merely a convenience for the autocrats.

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Victor Serge

A True Story

Published here for the first time in English, "A True Story" was written in 1946 when its author was living in Mexico. The Russian writer Victor Serge (1889–1947) was one of the most attractive figures in the European radical movement of the twentieth century: the author of many books, always independent in outlook and humane in quality. A valuable biographical-critical sketch by Peter Sedgwick appears in Serge's Memoirs of a Revolutionary, 1901–1941, *published by Oxford University Press. Serge thought of "A True Story" as a work in the line of Chekhov; what strikes us now, in retrospect, is the extent to which it also anticipates the writings of such Russian novelists as Solzhenitsyn.*—ED.

IN 1932 I WAS LIVING in Leningrad, and there I discovered the existence of clinical psychiatry when a person very dear to me was struck down by mental illness. Those were dark times, of shortages in the cities and famine in the villages, of terror, secret murders, and persecution of *spetsy* (technical specialists), peasants, true believers, and those opposed to the regime. I belonged to the last category, which meant that at night, even in the depths of sleep, I never ceased to listen for the noises on the staircase, for the ascending footsteps heralding my arrest . . . .

At that time, a doctor friend invited me to visit the city's oldest psychiatric hospital, the *Bolnitsa Ivana Chudotvortsa* (the Hospital of Saint John the Miracle-Worker), which was overcrowded, dilapidated, and shrouded in a somber reputation.

"I would like particularly," the doctor told me, "to acquaint you with a curious, an even amusing case, that is—how shall I put it?—of topical interest . . . ."

The old doctor himself looked alarmingly half-mad, though he was a man of great goodness, and always ruled by his unusual intelligence, which was, perhaps, limited yet deep. I still remember him with unbounded respect. He loved his ascetic existence and its privations, living cloistered in a little hell ignored by the world. He was a big, bony man, bald-headed and one-eyed. Broken teeth notched his smile. His university frock coat was nothing but creases and the color of faded poverty; his ties were frayed. He had spent all his life in the hospital, but was only its deputy director—and that was entirely his own fault, for a scruple of conscience had made him refuse to join the governing party. "That," people around him said, "was a cranky thing to do. He would be the director now and would have the food ration of a scientist of the first category . . . ." I had no reply to such criticism.

I WALKED THROUGH the tall iron gate, after identifying myself at the sentry box. Gaunt trees, the black earth giving off coldness, under the dim Baltic autumn sky. A flat facade, painted yellow, stained by smoke, pockmarked with grilled windows; I was entering petrified silence. (The hospital, of course, no longer bore the name of the healing saint, but nobody knew its new name and I have forgotten it; the memory of the saint has triumphed, without benefit of miracle.)

The doctor received me in an office, heated by a stove and quite pleasant. He looked at his watch with embarrassment and said:

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"Excuse me, Victor Lvovich, you'll have to be patient for a moment. This is the hour *they* arrive, and I must receive them."

They, the slightly stressed pronoun, as if to refer to ghosts, intrigued me. The doctor, his one eye bulging and charged with secretive light, made me feel vaguely uneasy.

"You see, Victor Lvovich, our establishment is attached to the GPU . . . meaning that the GPU sends me its clients when it can do nothing more with them . . . I have quite a few of them . . . ."

"Oh, I see," I said stupidly.

A moment later, on the hour, *they* arrived. Punctuality reigned in that world, at least for this kind of appointment. I watched their arrival through the smudgy double window pane, without trying to hide; my pince-nez, I thought, made me look like a psychiatrist . . . . A light truck stopped in the garden. Two beardless soldiers in trailing greatcoats got out and walked to the two wings of the back door. Suddenly they unsheathed their cavalry sabers, which looked enormous, broad and shining, as if all the paltry light of the miserable day were concentrated in their blades.

An officer appeared, opened the rear door of the truck, leaned inside, and shouted, "Come on, Citizens, step lively." And the citizens, men and women, hopped clumsily out of their box, for it stood high on its wheels, that box. The citizens were visibly dazzled by the daylight. The sabers, held rigidly, seemed to render them derisive honor. Nurses, dressed in white, seized them briskly and led them toward the hospital entrance, a few steps away. I counted more than half a dozen new arrivals, ordinary people, such as one sees in buses, almost without noticing them. Everything happened quickly, silently, without surprise or protest. The cargo of prisoners from the political police consisted on that day of calm lunatics and rational neurotics, who were merely stunned by fear. The nurses supported them, which seemed a wise precaution; without this support, they might have fallen limply onto the black earth, and one would perhaps have discovered that they were really only dolls dressed in rags, with waxen faces, borrowed from the prop department of Meyerhold's theater. (That great artist was to vanish only a few years later.) The shining sabers returned to their sheaths, the truck vanished behind the gaunt trees.

The one-eyed doctor returned to his office. He warmed his cold-reddened hands over the little stove.

"So," he said to me, "They are all pretty quiet today. It isn't always like this . . . I have nothing to offer you, Victor Lvovich, not a drop of vodka . . . . A glass of tea, perhaps, after our little inspection tour. Our food situation is awful."

"I don't doubt it, Doctor."

HE LIKED to talk to me, because he usually lived in silence, prudently self-contained, in the midst of incoherent mutterings.

"These GPU patients are often very embarrassing from the professional point of view . . . . You are going to see a little woman, on the second floor, a *shynkarka.* You know what they do: clandestine trading in alcohol . . . ."

"Yes, I know."

I knew the dubious and stagnant little markets—without any visible merchandise—that were put up behind the churches. There you would find groups of taciturn men and suspect women, all the color of misery, slow-moving, with shifty looks. One or the other would pass close to you and mumble through his teeth: "Tea . . . sugar . . . CYMA watch . . . state loan . . . ." The *shynkarka* didn't mumble, since a small glass would be visible in the hollow of her hand; the bottle was hidden under her coat. She sold vodka retail, a swallow, half a swallow, "Drink it down, citizen!" It would put the courage to live into those who couldn't afford even a quarter liter . . . Beneficent *shynkarka!*

". . . an insignificant blonde," the doctor was saying. "Eighteen years old, a peasant

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from Kostroma . . . caught *flagrante delicto*. Sent for three years to cut wood in the forests of north-central Siberia. It seems one doesn't do too badly there sometimes, rehabilitation through work . . . Too hard for her. This girl escapes, returns to Leningrad, God knows how, and starts again, selling her little glasses of vodka. She doesn't know what else to do; she needs only two rubles' capital. She refuses to prostitute herself; some of our peasant women are like that, they have an innate inhibition against prostitution . . . . Caught again red-handed. This time, five years' woodcutting, in a colder place, of course. In prison, she is in good humor, she lives only for the day, can't imagine the future. Infantile. The departure is announced, she gets herself into a nervous crisis, becomes untransportable! They send her to me. Here, she calms down, becomes gentle, starts living again. I sign her exit pass—and everything starts all over again; they return her to me tied up. Now she is reasonable. Her psychosis is reduced to a horror of the forest. I should sign her exit pass again . . . . What should I do, Victor Lvovich? Sign or not sign?"

"But, Doctor, why don't you send a report to the GPU? They should understand. . . ."

"No, it is you who should understand, my friend. I have sent them enough reports, believe me. They don't like me there. My job is not to comment on their decisions but to fill in their forms. . . ."

He winked with his one eye.

"And, would you believe it, I am also a bit afraid of the forest . . . . At my age!"

This little joke cheered us both up. I saw the blonde *shynkarka,* guilty of illicit traffic in alcohol. She was scrubbing the floor in the corridor. She smiled at the doctor, who addressed her familiarly and then told me:

"Can't do it . . . . if there is an inspection, I would be in trouble. I will sign her exit pass. I am not worried about her; they'll soon bring her back."

The grimy halls were filled with low noises which echoed across the floor in the damp cold. We visited several rooms. I saw what one usually sees in this kind of institution. I remember only one incident. A stark room, with a dozen or so women dressed in gray smocks, some prostrate, some without noticing us, others greeting us excitedly, a few making obscene gestures, others surrounding the doctor and all shouting at him at once. I drifted for a brief moment into a fantastic solitude.

The strange sensation one sometimes feels under the barely perceptible weight of a look made me turn. I saw a pretty dark-haired girl, serious, and almost elegantly dressed, her coarse scarf neatly tied at her neck. She examined me with great care and said quietly:

"Who are you?"

"A member of the Writers' Union."

"Party member?"

"No."

All this, speaking in a very low voice, in a firm tone, her brown eyes fixed upon mine. Charming, lucid, restless. She made me think of a bird held in one's hands so that one can feel its heartbeat. She cut off her phrases hurriedly; every second counted.

"I trust you. I'm not crazy, not hysterical, as you can see. I've wept too much. I'm a worker at the Skorokod shoe shop; there were seven arrests last night. For the love of God, or of whoever you love, let my parents know. Remember my name, my address . . . that's all."

"I'll inform your parents. I promise."

I remembered her name, her address. I had a glimpse of trembling lips. With the tip of my finger I touched her shoulders, which also trembled slightly.

"Try to calm yourself. I wish you. . . ." But what could I wish her?

We, the doctor and I, passed through some more hideous rooms. I felt ashamed of walking through them, useless and helpless. I was remembering a name, an address, the vague sensation of a look from brown eyes.

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"Now, Doctor," I said, "how about that interesting, even amusing case you told me about?"

"Right away, Victor Lvovich. Private room. Upper floor."

We went upstairs. The doctor opened the door of a spacious cell that seemed to be bathed in light. An aging man, wearing a gray greatcoat, was sitting on a window sill, reading.

"Good morning, Doctor. Good morning, Citizen," he said calmly, in a well-modulated voice. The doctor introduced us:

"Victor Lvovich K—, writer . . . Nestor Petrovich Yuriev, a friend of literature. You'll certainly be glad to meet . . . I will leave you alone for a moment . . . ."

Yuriev: a pale, asymmetric face, lengthened by a thin, whitish beard. A gray, calm, almost benevolent look. A visionary, I thought. A fine face; the features a bit too sharp, I can't explain why. I call him Yuriev here because Yuri is a Slavic form of George, and St. George, according to the *Golden Legend,* killed the dragon of Silene, whose anger could by appeased only by offering him children to devour.

Yuriev told me he was feeling well here, "like in a monk's cell," and, besides, he would feel just as well in prison, "naturally."

"You haven't been ill-treated?"

"Oh, no. They have even been quite pleasant since the first night.

"You write?" he asked me. "What kind of things?"

"Essays . . . ."

"Excuse me," he said gently. "Don't be annoyed by what I tell you. Essays are of no use; you must create . . . ."

"I also write novels . . . ."

"Excuse me again. There are so many lies and futilities in novels . . . ."

"I hope there are none in mine."

"I hope so too," Yuriev said with a smile.

I felt that he was sincere and guileless. And suddenly I, too, felt guileless.

"You have a beautiful view," I said, almost believing it.

"Yes, don't I?" he answered with satisfaction.

We saw, through the dusty double windows, the dismal garden with the barren trees; the black earth; the line of upright spikes of the railing; a stretch of the street without any movement; the vast, smoky sky.

"In my own home, I have much less contact with the outdoors," said Yuriev.

We were definitely in rapport. So I had come here, in this hostile city, to experience the precious feeling of mutual understanding and human contact, with a stranger—this "very curious case."

"I like writers who really dare to write . . . . I have had the honor of knowing a few of them: Rosanov, Gershensohn, Sologub, Blok, Bely . . . ." An elite of yesterday.

"It's a pity," he went on, "there are so many little clowns in literature."

"A pity," I said lightly. "What are you reading?"

"Dostoyevsky. The best and the worst, inseparable. He really looks for truth and fears to find it; he often finds it all the same, and then he is terrified . . . . A poor great man. Isn't that so?"

"Yes, yes," I said sincerely.

We went on for a while in that vein. Yuriev, it seemed to me, was saying astonishingly just things, well thought-out, revealing an exceptional capacity for analysis. Who was he? I could not place him. Why was he here? No doubt he came here between drawn sabers . . . . A counterrevolutionary? Guilty of mysticism? He judged me with greater penetration. His scrutinizing look took me in as he asked:

"Are you afraid?"

"Of course. Sometimes . . . like everybody . . . ."

Yuriev made a slight motion of denial with his head.

"No, not like everybody. If you are afraid, forgive me for saying so, you are a sick man who cultivates his sickness. Fear is a neurosis; it is contagious but curable. The great neurosis of the masses. I suf-

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fered from it. I cured myself of it. You can also cure yourself, if you want to. It's a matter of . . . ."

He withdrew from the conversation, looked into space, toward the floor, out of the window, beyond it all. I asked him confidentially, in a low voice for I could not raise my voice to him:

"It's all a matter of . . . of what? Do tell me."

". . . of liberation in depth . . . . It's terribly difficult to explain, that's the trouble. It is as if one tore a superfluous organ from oneself, a dark organ. It's certainly easier done than said. . . . It is enough to want. . . .

"Try to understand me beyond my words . . . . To want in the middle of the night, you know what I mean?"

"Perhaps," I said. "I believe that . . . ."

I was glad that the one-eyed doctor arrived that moment to take me back. I took leave of Yuriev with a long handshake.

THE ONE-EYED DOCTOR brought me back to his narrow little office, and we sat down before the lukewarm stove. Outside the window, a tree's naked branches seemed to gesture—a voiceless cry.

A serving girl brought us two glasses of sickly tea and four lumps of sugar no bigger than match-heads. The doctor's profile showed me his empty socket—an old scar crossed by a bluish line.

"I can only offer you carrot tea," said the doctor. "I won't have any other till the end of the month. Drink it very hot."

"But he freezes up there, your interesting case?"

"No. He is resistant. And we do heat the place a little. You know that our patients often have surprising physical endurance."

"Who is he?"

"A C.R., a counterrevolutionary; a serious business, charged with violating several sections of paragraph 58 of the Criminal Code. You're not asking me for a diagnosis, I hope? For some thirty years, Yuriev sold newspapers somewhere at the corner of Liteiny Prospect and Basseinaya Street, or maybe Panteleimonovskaya, the traditional quarter of writers. He got to know some of them by giving them newspapers on credit. He has some rare books, with dedications, the only things he loves on this earth. His books are now kept under official seal, and that torments him a bit. 'Are you afraid of losing them?' I asked him insidiously. The word *afraid* gave him a start. He thought a while before answering me that it would be a true bereavement for him and that regret partakes of love. 'But is not anticipation of regret a fear?' I insisted. 'No,' he said, 'rather an anxiety. Do you expect a thinking being to live without anxiety? What is thought, if not a brave anxiety?' He is subtle, you see.

"Writers send him bread and sausage, so he's quite well-fed. Yuriev esteems them but feels sorry for them because they live in fear. His own misfortune—I speak in objective terms—is that he freed himself from fear."

All I was seeing of the doctor was the scar of his lost eye under the enormous pale-pink brow. I felt that I didn't exist for him at all, and that he wanted to be for me, at the moment, only an abstract voice, without a face.

"A German writer once wrote a story of the man who lost his shadow . . . . But in this century, we do not lose our shadow, not even in the dark. It penetrates us and shines around us. It is fear. Yuriev, a humble citizen of our age, was ravaged by it for a long time, like you. The workers, he explains, fear to die of hunger if they don't steal, fear to steal, fear the Party, fear the Plan, fear themselves. The guilty fear to confess their crimes, the innocent fear their innocence, the fact that they have nothing to confess. The intellectuals fear to understand and fear not to understand, fear to seem to understand and fear to seem not to understand. The ideologists fear ideas, the believers fear to believe and fear to betray their belief. The people fear the government and the government fears the people. At the top of the

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state, the men of the Politburo fear each other, fear to act and fear not to act, fear an economic crisis, fear the masses, and fear a war. The *Khozyayin* [Boss] fears his attendants, his attendants fear him. He doesn't drink a glass of water without fear of poison, he mistrusts his most faithful guards.

"Yuriev, whose system I'm outlining to you, thinks the most powerful are the most sick, but they are not the most to be pitied. For many nights he trembled, although nothing threatened him. He concluded that dangers exist, but are best faced with serenity; that fear fills our souls with ghosts, debases us, darkens us. 'But how about the instinct of self-preservation?' I asked Yuriev. 'The instinct of self-preservation wants the joy of living,' he answered.

"One morning, Yuriev had a revelation. He woke up free. No more fear of anything, anything; only a clear feeling of being cleansed. That morning Yuriev was in a festive mood. And everything went well for him, because of the new assurance with which he tackled his little problems. They had refused him bread cards because, fifteen years earlier, he had tried to open a little bookstore; an excapitalist . . . . He now was so boldly persuasive before a committee that everything was arranged on the spot. He could be happy; but did he have the right to keep the secret of salvation to himself? Yuriev loves men. He spent several days writing out by hand forty copies of an *Appeal to the People:*

> Why do you tremble, citizens? Why do the members of our triumphant Great Communist party tremble? Why does our government discover plots that do not exist? Why do you fear to raise your voices against lies and indignities? Enough! The nightmare will be over tomorrow, if only you want it. Look at each other loyally, without fear or resentment, and the abomination will crumble. . . .

"Yuriev signed his forty *Appeals,* but not because of pride. He wrote his home address below each of them as well . . . . He spent a night pasting them up in the central streets, under the eyes of the militiamen and late passersby. They all took him for an ordinary posterman, working a little late so that he could paste in peace. After he had finished, he went home to sleep.

"At nine in the morning, a character in uniform and one in civilian dress knocked at his door . . . . His bag was packed; he was ready. He knew that the government would not try him at once: the psychological effort of his *Appeal* required time. Several interrogators of the State Political Department questioned him in turn, exhorted him, threatened him, tried to win him over: Who are your accomplices? Which addresses of consulates do you know? Who paid you? What do you think of capitalism? 'They're mad,' he said sadly. A military man, at the end of his patience, called him a counter-revolutionary dog, 'to be shot this very evening!' Yuriev shook his head but did not stir from his firm benevolence. 'Control your nerves, Citizen Chief! I preach the last revolution, the only true one. Let me explain . . .' And he demonstrated to them tirelessly that fear made them lose their common sense, that they, too, could cure themselves, as he had, that this was the only salvation. He was so reasonably persuasive that the disconcerted men in uniform took him for an extraordinary faker . . . but faker of what?

"Yuriev did not flinch when guns were pointed at him. 'Never forget,' he told them, 'what I have told you . . . . I have saved you against your own will . . . .' Very harassed high officials attended these useless interrogation sessions . . . . They ended by sending Yuriev to me . . . . What do you think?"

Translated by I. A. LANGNAS

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Federico Mancini

From Reform to Adventure

August 1969

REBELLION in the Italian universities was already detectable in 1966. The crucible of the student movement, however, was the month-long occupation of the Turin campus in November 1967. From Turin the rebellion spread throughout the country, making a clean sweep of the old party-controlled organizations.[1] Soon its unique traits began to take shape.

First of all, there is a flat refusal to participate in university decision-making. While the German SDS has sometimes laid claim to *Drittelparität* arrangements and some SDS people sit on student-faculty committees, though with the purpose that Lenin assigned to Communists in bourgeois parliaments,[2] the Italian students oppose codetermination. They "dont want to run the pigsty" with the professors, lest they be coopted and corrupted. One reason they fight the government-sponsored university reform bill is that it aims to "cage" them by student participation in university governing bodies.

Besides, running the pigsty together implies the election of representatives, and disavowal of the principle of representation is a second trait of the Italian student movement. Nowhere has "direct democracy" been so uncompromisingly espoused as in Italy, though its original purism now seems in decline. Student assemblies are still held and lip service is paid to the sovereign authority of the direct voice of the people, but such assemblies have proved time-consuming and unwieldy. Hence, more and more emphasis is laid on a new form of organization, the "grass-roots committees" (*comitati di base*), which are small and geared to specific problems and obviously more effective. An even more significant departure from the careless spontaneity of old is the progressive transformation of an open and constantly changing leadership into a semipermanent steering committee. This self-appointed Jacobin elite already shows all the symptoms of bureaucratic degeneration.

The third distinctive feature of the Italian student movement has been its remarkable ability to map out and implement a common strategy for the major campuses. Of course, this has been made easier by the highly centralized nature of the Italian university system: the rector of Palermo will respond to a student challenge in much the same fashion as his colleague of Milan, because both are responding to the same ministerial circular. But, granted that the student movement has been lucky in not having to deal with a Hayakawa here and a Perkins there, the primary reason for its success in coordi-

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[1] Prior to the 1967–68 academic year the Italian campuses were dominated by four associations: UGI (predominantly Communist), INTESA (Christian Democratic), AGI (Liberal), FUAN (neo-Fascist). They all entered lists of candidates for the election of student representative bodies whose main functions were to carry out cultural, recreational, and welfare activities. On this system, see my piece "Student Power in Italy," to be published shortly by the *American Journal of Comparative Law*.

The current movement, *movimento studentesco*, is referred to throughout the article as the (Italian) student movement.

[2] *Cf.* Arnold Beichman, "Letter from Columbia," *Encounter*, May 1969, p. 15.

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nating activities at various universities has been its own internal cohesion. The hard core of the movement is composed of Communists who find themselves at the extreme left of their party, Anarchists, Trotskyites, Maoists of various persuasions,[3] and members of *Potere operaio* (Worker Power), a group with aspirations resembling those of the old revolutionary syndicalists. These sects have always expended considerable energy in internecine wrangles but, until a few months ago, have also managed to patch up their differences and rally dissenters to the general line. The moral tension of the militants, rather than their adhesion to the Leninist doctrine of "democratic centralism," and especially the undiscriminating character of police busts have contributed to this extraordinary achievement.

THE STRATEGY of the Italian student movement has varied with circumstances. In broad outline, its development falls into three phases: the last months of 1967, spring and autumn of 1968, and the winter of 1969.

(1) The first phase was characterized by a harsh critique of the university as an authoritarian "class" institution, but also by a determination to make use of it. Future economic exploitation is anticipated in the university which is, indeed, often compared to a factory (a graffito at the Liberal Arts Faculty in Rome reads: "*FIAT is our university, the university is our FIAT*"). But the men and the facilities of the university can be turned to account with a view to producing new values, to laying the cultural foundations of the coming revolution. To achieve this goal, the student movement demanded a "restructuring" of courses: no more lectures delivered *ex cathedra* or teacher-dominated seminars but egalitarian "study groups" where professors, now called "experts," would cooperate with the students in approaching the subject matter (any subject matter) from more "relevant" angles and, above all, in debunking the myth of the neutrality of science (any science).

The study groups were conceived as models of a nongovernmental university and, for their most daring advocates, a nongovernmental society.[4] These notions, which resemble the schemes of a pragmatic anarchist like Paul Goodman, were often expressed in Che Guevara's phrase: "Society as a whole will have to be a gigantic school." Less loftily, the study groups were also supposed to provide activists with an opportunity to influence the inchoate mass. "Campus" and "college life" are meaningless terms in Italian universities where, except for a usually squalid cafeteria, students have no place to get together. Students meet "on the job," in the classrooms. Classrooms being the only places where new proselytes could be made, it was imperative for the militants to change the conditions of classroom work in order to insert the preaching of their gospel and legitimate it.

Those were the days. . . . How many are the professors who look back in anger to the "study-groups period"? Surely not those—a huge majority—who turned down the students' offer (at that time offers were not always accompanied by threats and it was

[3] In Italy there are at least five groups of Maoist inspiration: the League of the Marxist-Leninists, the Revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party of Italy, two Communist parties of Italy (Marxist-Leninist), and the Union of the Italian Communists (Marxist-Leninist). By far the most vital among them is the Union, which is slightly less sectarian and more loosely organized. On May Day, the Unionists were able to bring out at least 10,000 people to parade in all the major cities.

The Trotskyites are divided into two movements, respectively affiliated to the Posadas and the Maitan Fourth International. In the Italian student movement, however, the Trotskyites have played a minor role; at any rate, a far less important one than in France.

[4] The "study groups" were first theorized in the *Carta rivendicativa di Torino,* a document produced during the occupation of Turin University, which has for the Italian student movement much the same value as the Port Huron Statement for the American SDS. The charter is now republished in *Documenti della rivolta studentesca,* Bari: Laterza, 1968, pp. 253 ff.

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easy to show some backbone), nor the very few who agreed to participate in the experiment. Actually, the excitement of the latter—mostly liberals—was boundless. In Italy one becomes a tenured professor (a "baron") through cooptation by one's peers. To wield academic (baronial) power one must enjoy their confidence. But is there a more exalting experience for a liberal liege lord than seeing his power recognized, nay legitimized *also* from below? Indeed, the above-below relation remained by and large untouched. Being referred to as an "expert" was for the leftist professor not unlike the pleasure Count Honoré Riqueti de Mirabeau must have experienced when addressed as *citoyen*: in the study group it was he who did most of the talking and the replies of the radical students were still very much within the rules of the old game.

Besides, many a progressive member of the faculty felt that by agreeing to join the study groups they were contributing to a self-regeneration of the university, of whose wretched conditions they were agonizingly aware. The student-movement leaders did not conceal their revolutionary intentions; but the liberal professors hoped that, while theory remained revolutionary, practice could be steered along reformist lines. In time, they thought, the dross (the inordinate politicizing, the lack of interest in cool research) would be jettisoned; the substance (more vivid seminars and fewer drab lecture courses, more contact between teachers and students) would stick. Such delusions were soon exposed, but for once it is not the students who should be blamed for the liberals' defeat.

(2) The blame lay on Academe as a whole. The university might have taken up the student challenge by working to reform itself. It would have required patience, political skill, and some knowledge of adolescent psychology; at that stage, when only a few student chieftains really knew their own mind, efforts might have yielded fruit. Or the university might have counterattacked. Against the portrait that the radicals drew—a center entrusted by the capitalist system with the task of training its future slaves—it might have put forward a different image: a center of free inquiry and criticism, whose aims should be realized in a climate of political neutrality. But in Italy we had practically none of this; we had none of the soul-searching of the French professors after May or of American professors after Columbia. Cynical shrugs, condescending conversation, or vindictive indignation at "those cranks" were the reactions of most Italian faculty members.

Which, in turn, had a number of consequences. It radicalized many students who still hesitated at all-out confrontation. It persuaded the student leadership that the university could be neither relied on nor exploited. It brought grist to the mill of the fringe (left-Maoists and *operaisti*) who had been contending that the movement's only chance of survival was in an alliance with the revolutionary agents *par excellence*: the industrial workers in the north, the landless peasants in the south. In the history of the student movement, this was a major turning point. Until then most militants had thought that in revolutionizing the universities they were touching the jugular vein of the system; from that moment on, they knew this was not true. In order to revolutionize the universities, they had to get out of them—and, in the words of Rudi Dutschke, embark on "a long march through the institutions."

The study groups were given up. They were no longer useful; they entangled energies needed elsewhere: in winning over the high-school children (high schools were an obvious first choice among the "outside" institutions to be attacked); in helping the workers on picket lines; in organizing the slum dwellers of the large cities, and so forth. But what was to be done with the universities? Surely, they could not be left alone, for there the movement found its strength, its "masses" (not an ironical expression: Italian students number about 600,000). Nor could

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they be captured. The student movement understood in practice Lenin's critique of Blanquism. Besides, its leaders were not yet certain about their ability to mobilize a large enough number of recruits, or about the measure of the authorities' tolerance.

Therefore, a proposal was made by Vittorio Rieser—possibly the movement's cleverest strategist—to break the universities in two parts.[5] On the one side, a section should be left to the academic authorities for routine activities (courses, examinations, etc.); on the other, an "autonomous space" should be created to be controlled by the students for such initiatives as political meetings, workshops, and "anti-courses." Rieser's scheme obviously echoed foreign experiences: e.g. the American free universities, the German *kritische Universität*. But it also served a practical purpose. The professors' university would play the role of a *Gegenvolk*; it would be the tangible incarnation of Evil. Its inbred authoritarianism and irrelevance would continuously beget frustration and dissent. The "autonomous space" would ensure the presence of the movement in the university and enable it to reap what the enemy had sown: in other words, it would be the movement's sanctuary.

The battle for "autonomous space" took place during the Easter holidays and ended in May after a number of "stiff" occupations. In June, having secured their rear, the students of Turin, Milan, Trento, Padua, Bologna, Pisa, and Rome were ready to start their long-planned "operation working class."

(3) The summer of 1968 was spent in analyses of the French May, in attempts at establishing contacts with fellow movements abroad (especially the Germans, whom the Italian students admire for their superiority in matters of theory) and, above all, in the search for ways to form a student-worker alliance. But this period of relative inactivity did not last long: a new tumultuous phase was beginning in Italy. First the chemical industry near Venice, later the tire industry in Turin and Milan, and the sugar refineries of Ferrara were upset by a powerful wave of strikes, often of the wildcat variety. The workers' decisions often bypassed or ran counter to union policy. Reminiscent of the factory councils (*consigli di fabbrica*) the young Gramsci had advocated in 1920, these workers' meetings invented or rediscovered tough forms of struggle—slowdowns, sit-ins, "staggered" walkouts, short and repeated (or "hiccup") stoppages. When they put forward a claim, they made it clear that it was nonnegotiable.

In November and December the crisis became acute. Hundreds of thousands of high-school students supported demands for freedom of assembly in the schools. Two Sicilian farmhands were killed by the police during a labor dispute and the emotions aroused in the public were violent. Normally sedate social groups, such as white-collar employees, higher government officials, school teachers, resident physicians in hospitals, began to display an unprecedented aggressiveness in their demands for better working conditions. Not even the courtrooms, where left-wing and right-wing judges engaged in incredible brawls, escaped the contagion of *contestazione*. The whole country seemed to be in a frenzy; the government seemed at a loss for solutions, and the Communist party—the Great Sphinx of Italian politics—was about to hold a congress that everybody expected to be crucial.

It must have been at this point that the leaders of the student movement decided to cross the Rubicon. This "objectively prerevolutionary situation" could be helped to blow up through a few "voluntarist pushes," in their words, through some *lotta leggera urbana* (light urban struggle). As Gramsci would have said, Italian society had grown "gelatinous" enough for a resolute vanguard

[5] Rieser's proposal was outlined in an article ("Strategia del potere studentesco") published in the left-liberal weekly *L'Astrolabio*, March 31 and April 7, 1968.

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to storm it.[6] If it could be brought home to the Communist bureaucrats that power was within reach, even *they* might awaken from their 25-year long sleep.

All this, however, was bound to take time. The student movement needed bases in which its commandos could prepare their expeditions into the cities and seek shelter afterwards: it needed its Sierra Maestra or—an even more alluring reference—its Yenan. For this, the "autonomous space" conquered in May was no longer sufficient. The universities had to be seized and kept under absolute control; in other words, they had to be destroyed as centers of teaching and research. It was a dramatic decision, even for people much toughened by a year of conflict and hard bargaining. New slogans appeared. The old graffiti were turgid, bombastic, at times sophomoric, but one could smile while reading them—or feel sympathetic. In January 1969 they acquired a sinister, anti-intellectual, even fascistic dimension: "When class warfare becomes acute, culture is of no use"; "To be a spectator means to be a traitor"; "Rape your Alma Mater"; etc. A brilliant scholar, who counts himself a fellow traveler of the movement and had just finished a thousand-page book on the use of analogy in philosophy and science, told me without flinching that the burning of the Alexandrian library by Amr Ibn al-As was the first example of a successful cultural revolution.

The new tactics consisted in keeping the universities occupied as long as possible and, during the brief lulls between occupations, in making demands which, if accepted by the faculties (and they often were), would make serious work impossible. Thus, the Bologna Faculty of Liberal Arts was requested to suppress the written test in Italian; most universities were forced to accept an arrangement under which students were entitled to refuse failing marks and take the same examination, month after month, until they passed.

It was bedlam, but the uproar remained largely confined to the campuses. One after the other, the delegates at the Bologna Communist Congress censured the "adventurism" of the student vanguards. The government finally moved. The truth at last dawned upon the students leaders: *there would be no revolution in Italy in the foreseeable future.* At the end of March the police broke into the occupied universities, with a tremendous deployment of men and weapons. In Rome they found five students asleep, no students in Bologna, and everywhere garbage, anti-Communist writings, broken furnishings and, oddly enough, a number of clogged toilets. Today, a rather lugubrious order reigns again in the groves of Italian Academe.

SO FAR narrative, now interpretation.

Last year, it already seemed clear that, despite Marxist jargon, the Italian student movement had little in common with socialism. At least in its Italian version, I wrote, the New Left might be the legatee not of the Old Left, but of the *Older* Left, the *philosophes* and particularly Rousseau.[7] Today, this seems even more evident. The student movement—or, more precisely, the non-Communist part of it, is *a characteristically bourgeois movement.* First, in the

[6] Here is Gramsci's famous—and, in the days I am referring to, widely quoted–passage: "Ilici [Lenin, in Gramsci's prison vocabulary], it seems to me, realized that the war of movement victoriously conducted in the East in 1917 did not suit the conditions of the West, where only a war of attrition was possible. . . . In the East the state was everything and the civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West there was a balanced relation between state and civil society and when the state trembled, the robust structure of the civil society immediately emerged. The state was merely a frontline dugout behind which there spread a solid network of strongholds and pillboxes" (*Note sul Machiavelli,* Turin: Einaudi, 1949, p. 68).

The implication in extremist quarters, of course, was that the time of the "war of attrition" had come to an end in the whole West and especially in Italy.

[7] See Federico Mancini, "The Italian Student Movement," *AAUP Bulletin,* December 1968, pp. 431 f.

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obvious sense that its militants are of bourgeois extraction (only 13 percent of the Italian students have a lower-class background and these are very scantily represented in the rank and file of the movement, let alone its leadership). But also in the far more important sense, despite the movement's self-image, its traits fall into a familiar bourgeois pattern. This is not to deny the radical character of its protest; the contrary is true. Indeed, must all revolutionary critiques of the capitalist system be Marxist-inspired and Marxist-orientated?

One should not attach an excessive importance to words, even when they sound convincing. Any project can be adorned with suitable quotations from Marx, Lenin, or the most recent patron saint of the movement, Rosa Luxemburg. It is equally easy to coin slogans with a Guevarist or a palaeo-Bolshevist ring, and to write articles explaining why and how one should love Chairman Mao, particularly when the authors operate in a cultural context (the Italian intelligentsia) which has been imbued with Marxist ideology for half a century.

Nor should one overrate the students' insistence on the leading role of the working class and their almost obsessive wooing of the working man. Bourgeois movements, too, have tried to involve the working class in their own enterprises. Italy has a long tradition of such movements. Obvious cases in point are Mazzini, Arturo Labriola, Gaetano Salvemini and, more recently, Carlo Rosselli and Piero Gobetti, Gramsci's liberal friend who saw in the automobile workers of Turin the emerging aristocracy of modern Italy.[8]

Let us forget the words and consider the deeds; let us go back to the trajectory of the movement and try to break through the screen of its own rationalizations. The university appears to the student both as a Leviathan and a Juggernaut: a huge, clumsy and crushing monster which *represses* him, *atomizes* him, stuffs him with an enormous amount of *irrelevant* information and eventually flings him—a badly-packaged marketable product—into the world of business, the civil service, or the professions.[9] His first reaction is a critique of the university in strictly liberal terms. Against the alienation he suffers, the student advances such characteristic "bourgeois" values as the right to resist indoctrination (why should we law students be taught that legal science must be insulated against the intrusion of value judgments and social facts? What kind of lawyers do they want us to become?); the right to inquire beyond the unreasonably stiff limits of the studies program (why should we students of government be offered but one course in Afro-Asian institutions, and none on Latin America? And why should the subject of this course be confined to the legal systems of a few "safe" Afro-Asian countries?); freedom of speech (why are questions in class frowned upon by most professors?); freedom of assembly and association (why are our requests for classrooms for political meetings usually rejected?).

Hence, the proposal to set up "study groups": these, despite the many catchwords in which they were couched, basically amounted to a new, *nonauthoritarian* way of studying *together* things *more relevant*. But this attempt, naïve or impractical though it might have been, ran into a wall, which allowed no room for future student initiative.

[8] On Piero Gobetti, whose writings are unfortunately little known outside of Italy, see Guiseppe Mammarella, *Italy after Fascism. A Political History*, Montreal, Canada: Casalini, 1964, pp. 49 f.

[9] This description may appear to be a caricature: it is, actually, exceedingly sober. May I refer the reader to the so-called Brooks Report on the state of scientific research in Italy, published in 1967 under the auspices of OECD, and to *L'Università come impresa*, by G. Martinoli, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1968. A good point made by Dr. Martinoli—whom the student movement's militants describe as a despicable reformist—is that Italian universities survive only because less than one-third of the registered students attend classes (though, theoretically, they are obliged to attend). If all students went to class, their very weight would cause the staircases and the floors of our universities to collapse.

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On the other side, students found opposition —not of ideas—but of ossified structures (the univeristies) and of other institutions more violent (the police) or obtuse (the judiciary). Grievances that at the outset had been fundamentally cultural became political. The students embarked on an anti-institutional struggle (Dutschke's "long march") that manifested itself first as a refusal of, later as an all-out assault on, the institutions, above all the university.

But even this struggle, for all its harshness and the anger it revealed, is not founded on a "class" analysis of the university and the system that supports it. The university may be hell, it may stifle the students, deprive them of their power of self-determination and emancipation. *But it does not technically exploit them, it does not extract from them any surplus value.* In spite of the Roman graffito, the university will never be the students' FIAT; students *qua* students will never be part of the working class, and their protest is bound to be superstructural, that is, at bottom, vain or inadequate.[10] This appraisal, of course, will not be shared by people like Herbert Read, who wrote that, since institutions in the modern world "legalise tyranny and spread its invisible tentacles into every cell of life," it is at their breakdown that one should primarily aim.[11] But Sir Herbert was an avowed anarchist: namely, as any Marxist would tell you, a petty-bourgeois radical day-dreamer.

A number of marginal elements confirm the irredeemably nonsocialist nature of the student movement. First of all, the "style" of its protest, which is impulsive, nervous, some say epileptic; at any rate, very different from that, as a rule patient and robust, of worker actions, when they are carried out under the leadership of the Communist party or the Communist-orientated trade unions.[12] Second, the character of its literature, which is basically sociological (sociology, the bourgeois science!) and clearly eschews historic-economic analyses in the Marxist tradition. Third, its reaction to the developments in the Iron Curtain countries. The Italian revolutionary students have no sympathy whatever for the Yugoslav experiment. They took no interest in the Prague spring. When the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia, they accepted without turning a hair the Chinese view that the whole incident amounted to a rift between two revisionist cliques. When Jan Palach burned himself, they remained unperturbed. As a matter of fact, on the front of the Commercio Hotel in Milan, which the students occupied last November and still keep under control,[13] a huge inscription appeared: *"Down with Palach!"*

At first glance, this attitude seems outrageous and contradictory. In reality, it simply proves that the student radicals don't care about socialism. To say, as they do, that socialism has nothing in common with the systems of Eastern Europe and to point to their models of the just society by rhythmically chanting, *Cina - Cuba - Corea - Viet-*

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[10] This is precisely the conclusion reached in an essay on the student movement by one of the most perspicacious Marxist scholars in Italy, the literary critic Alberto Asor Rosa. See his "Dalla rivoluzione culturale alla lotta di classe," *Contropiano*, I, 3, 1968, pp. 480 ff. Professor Asor Rosa, however, admits that the movement might be or become a "problematic ally" of the working class.

[11] Herbert Read, "Pragmatic Anarchism," *Encounter*, January 1968, p. 61.

[12] See Giorgio Amendola, "La crisi della società italiana e il Partito comunista," *Critica marxista*, VII, 2, 1969, p. 46. Among the Communist leaders, the rightist Amendola is by far the least sympathetic toward the student movement, and whatever he writes about it has to be accepted with reservation. On this score, however, he is undoubtedly right.

[13] The hotel had been closed for two years; it belongs to the city of Milan whose urban development plan provided for its demolition. It was occupied on November 28, 1968, by students lodged in the university dormitories with the argument that the latter were inadequate (an unquestionable truth) and, at any rate, amounted to "cultural and sexual ghettos" (a half truth). Presently, the hotel accommodates about 100 people, half of whom are students and the rest an assortment of working men and foreigners, especially Arabs. On April 11 the hotel was assailed by a fascist squad equipped with Molotov cocktails, but the attack was repulsed.

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nam,[14] may be amusing but is also shallow. By hook or crook, "socialism" is there too: between the Elbe and the Ussuri. It is a tangle of contradictions, failures and successes; it has brought emancipation to some, slavery to others. Probably, on balance, the liabilities outweigh the assets. Yet those who do not feel—no, not sympathetic to that mess, that toilsome and bloody human venture but just—involved in it, have no right to count themselves socialists. I hazard the guess that the students and the metalworkers of Prague would agree.

THE ABOVE INTERPRETATION suggests that the Italian student movement is bound not to attain its long-range goal. In other words, no revolution is in sight, no "new-left"-inspired mass movement is likely to take root.

The reason is clear enough. The causes of the nation's present malaise and recurrent crises have been pointed out a thousand times: a parliament apparently unable to legislate, an inept central and local bureaucracy, a judiciary still thinking of Italy as a basically agrarian society, the most expensive and least efficient social security system in the Common Market area, a shameful health and welfare system, a wretched school system—in brief, a decrepit social structure that does not allow a more equitable distribution of the benefits accruing from the tremendous economic and technical progress of the last decade. The Italian problem, therefore, is to create efficient institutions, not to deny them. The Communist party, for one, knows all this perfectly well. Thus, while it demands "structural" or "strategic" reforms—reforms not assimilable by the system and hence potentially subversive—it concretely goads the government into taking such measures as would help streamline the system.

Why this is happening is not a question to be discussed here. For this analysis, two facts matter: (*a*) during the last few years the issues which the PCI has most agitated have been decentralization of the legislative power, pension reform, hospital reform, town planning, high-school reform; (*b*) their remarkable electoral gains in May 1968 prove that in doing so the Communists have correctly interpreted the character and the direction of the protest spreading in Italian society.

It is precisely these facts—the interest of the PCI in the rationalization of the system and its ability to represent the dissatisfied segment of the electorate—that makes the position of the student movement hopeless. The movement actually had but one real chance: to force upon the PCI a process of revolutionary hardening, that is, to stir up such unrest among the masses as to convince the Communist leaders that, by pursuing their previous strategy, they would have lost a considerable slice of their following. Considering the experience and the organizational strength of the two movements, the possibilities of the student movement were infinitesimal; in fact, they did not materialize.

The reverse took place: it was the Communists who turned the student revolt to advantage by beating the young radicals at their own game. Whereas the French C P was compelled by circumstances to commit itself right away on the issue of student extremism, the Italian C P was so lucky as to have time to reflect. Its leaders realized that the campus war and the spontaneous stepping up of class struggle in the nation at large were a gift of providence in two respects.

First, these events would force the parties in power (Christian Democrats, Socialists, Republicans) to draft far-reaching measures, and especially a university reform bill—that is, to tackle a number of burning problems which were bound to make mischief among

[14] It was probably with reference to these "models" that the new deputy secretary general of the PCI, Enrico Berlinguer, asked at the Bologna Congress the following rhetorical question: "What profit can be found in discussing Republics and Principalities which have never been seen or known to exist in reality?"

Very much in the style of Gramsci and Togliatti, the question was a quotation from Machiavelli: and, as usually, a felicitous one.

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them and inside each of them. The Communists, of course, would be able to profit from such differences by playing one faction against another, or taking up the cause of underprivileged groups (e.g. the junior faculty in their conflict with the tenured professors), so as to weaken the government coalition.

Second, the PCI felt that it might capitalize on the creeping chaos, the *chienlit rampant* which the students were spreading throughout the country. Not that the Italian Communists have any fondness for *chienlit*: like their French comrades or, for that matter, General de Gaulle, they hate the sight of it. But a little *chienlit* would enable the party, if it managed to have it stopped at the right time, to present itself as the guarantor of social peace, thus enhancing its prestige.

Consequently, the Communists beat their breasts in self-criticism for not having immediately understood the "deep roots" of the student revolt and stated that the latter had opened "a new front in class warfare" (which wasn't quite the same thing as saying that students were part of the working class, but came pretty close to it). In the autumn of 1968 they vigorously supported the high-school insurrection and in January 1969 they harshly attacked the police for shooting at the students who—in what should probably be regarded as their most futile action—had thrown tomatoes at the customers of a plush nightclub in that Italian Miami Beach, Viareggio. Having realized, however, that a frenzy of adult backlash was building up, particularly in the lower class, the C P drastically reversed its course. It did not approve of the February–March wave of occupations and, when the police broke into the campuses, its protests were mild and mixed with reproaches about student "vandalism."

At the outset Communists and extremists managed to coexist in the student movement, though with some difficulty. The charismatic leaders were all self-styled Maoists, but the Communists made up the bulk of the intermediate echelons and were no less belligerent than the others. In folklore (attire, hair style, rhetoric, songs etc.),[15] the two groups were so similar as to make it impossible for an outsider to tell them apart. Then, toward the beginning of this year, the Communist "university sections," which had always been regarded as part and parcel of the movement, appeared to seek the status of autonomous units. Conflicts broke out on policy, which were less furious but far more serious than the mostly theoretic wrangles of old. During the sit-ins of the late winter, the two factions clearly pursued diverging policies; today, on many campuses, they have proceeded to a formal rupture.

A couple of weeks ago, I saw in Bologna a *dazibao* (Italianized Chinese for "hand-written poster") calling a meeting of the "red-line comrades" for the next morning. It was an ominous sign. In the jargon of the revolutionary sects, the notion of "red line" implies that of "black line," where "black" stands for ugly, devious, nocturnal; and the black-line fellows are no longer comrades but renegades.

THE STRENGTH AND THE PRESTIGE of the Italian student movement appear to be, at this moment, at an all-time low. The price the movement is paying for last winter's blunder is very high. Apparently, its strategists had mistaken nationwide disturbances for an imminent revolution and had concluded that the advent of the revolution might be speeded up by turning the nation's major universities into "red bases." Now, many militants are in jail, others—the Communists—are hastily abandoning ship, and most rank-and-file students no longer respond to the old slogans. The government reform bill, a far-from-daring piece of legislation which grants the students a *Drittelparität* in the

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[15] The first lines of the most popular song were: "Johnson boia, Johnson boia, giù le mani dal Vietnam" (Johnson, you hangman, hands off Vietnam.) Oddly enough, the tune was that of the refrain of "John Brown's Body."

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university decision-making bodies, has been drafted and laid before the Senate. The movement's last fortress, the Commercio Hotel in Milan, still holds out, but its days appear numbered. The occupiers have already been ordered by the bailiff to leave, and the bailiff is usually soon followed by the police.

Of course, there is no assurance that the present calm will last. The crucial question is whether and how the reform bill is enacted. If the government manages to promulgate it by the start of the next academic year, the situation will not greatly differ from that of France after the coming into force of the Faure *loi d'orientation*. The Communists will lay aside their largely verbal bias against co-determination, form some front organization and enter lists of candidates for the new mixed student-faculty committees. The left-radicals of the student movement will boycott the election of student delegates and stir up riots wherever they can, but they will suffer a definite retrenchment. In other words, they will be reduced to the status of a small and not particularly fascinating extra-parliamentary opposition, whose main function will be to train the leaders of the future Italian United Revolutionary party, if indeed the *groupuscules* of the extreme left ever coalesce to form such a party.

But if the reform bill is not enacted or undergoes a further emasculation, a very different development is to be expected. The moderate or reform-minded groups which are beginning to fill the present power vacuum in the student body would collapse and the student movement could easily capitalize on the students' rage. Moreover, under such circumstances, the movement would certainly regain the support, though itself tactical, of the Communist party: and past events have shown how explosive this mixture can be.

The universities, which have practically not functioned for two years, would become impossible places to live and work in. The despondency of the younger professors would reach a climax and support already strong inclinations to seek shelter in private research centers and foreign seats of learning. The contention of the radicals that the role assigned to Italy in the international division of labor is to import patents and export brains would be confirmed. It would be a disgrace and, in the long run, a tragedy. Do the men who in government and the opposition command the allegiance of the Italians realize what is at stake?

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Michael Morrow

The Neutralists Speak Out

LAST JUNE, while President Thieu was meeting President Nixon at Midway, a small group of intellectuals, students, politicians, and labor leaders gathered for dinner near the Truong Minh Giang market in a crowded quarter of Saigon. Not all of those attending knew that this would be anything more than a social gathering. Some had brought their wives. But when the purpose of the meeting became clear, wives went home and a declaration was read. It contained four main points:

(1) A complete cease-fire must be brought into effect immediately.

(2) A reconciliatory government must be established, composed of nationalists acceptable to all sides. This government would have the responsibility to establish normal patterns of living, to secure order and basic civil liberties for the entire nation, and to prepare for and hold elections to determine the political future of Vietnam.

(3) This government would maintain friendly relations with all peace-loving countries in the world and would not join in any military alliance.

(4) All non-South Vietnamese forces must withdraw from South Vietnam according to agreed-upon timetables.

Of those present, 23 signed the declaration (three abstained), bringing into being the *Luc Luong Quog Gia Tien Bo,* or the Progressive National Force (PNF).

There was much speculation within and without this small band. What would happen to them for their brash act? Thieu returned and went on television, threatening to punish anyone who advocated coalition and making the point that "there will be no peace cabinet, no provisional government, and no such thing as a reconciliation government."

But Tran ngoc Lieng, chairman of the committee that established the PNF, moved quickly. He got the declaration to the foreign press and accommodated requests for interviews. When Thieu's attack came, Lieng went to the Vietnamese press to say: "We are of the minority as President Thieu has said. But if President Thieu wants to arrest us, let him do so. Why stigmatize us?"

Only four months earlier a Saigon professor, Le Doan Kim, had issued a one-man declaration for neutrality. He had quickly gone to jail and was already serving a one-year jail term. The PNF could well expect the worst, but it did not happen. The 23 were called one by one to see the National Police, but the interrogations were polite. No one went to jail.

The PNF's timing had been perfect. Their coming-out followed closely upon a visit by a prestigious interreligious U.S. study team looking into religious and political freedom in Vietnam. The study team had made an international issue of political and religious repression in South Vietnam. Moreover, the government's arrests of the Venerable Thich Thien Minh, *Saigon Daily News* publisher Nguyen Lau, Buddhist student leader Pham Phi Long, and a host of other students and intellectuals throughout the spring had set off vociferous protests in the Lower House.

Finally, the President himself had started something of a "Hundred Flowers Bloom"

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campaign by forming his own political party and asking others with opinions different from his own to do likewise.

Nearly two months have elapsed and the PNF has enjoyed a healthy growth. Recently Lieng made a showing at Saigon University in support of the students' antimilitary-training sit-in and received a hero's welcome. The silver-haired lawyer now bustles around Saigon, meeting several times a day with his cohorts. His law practice has been all but abandoned, and the plainclothesman who watches his offices on Phan Thanh Gian Street has little to do. The PNF is gaining strength, revitalizing the position of the Third Force in South Vietnam's politics.

Since the time of Ngo Dinh Diem, when political parties were destroyed in the name of one-party dictatorship, the bastion of Third Force resistance has been the militant branch of the Buddhist Church. But the bonzes who determine the militant Buddhists' strategies—Thich Tri Quang and Thich Thien Minh—have been fighting an unsuccessful holding action since their 1965 uprising was crushed by Nguyen Cao Ky's air force and U.S. Marines. Criticism of the bonzes' leadership has long been heard from secular quarters within the struggle movement.

It is significant that three of the PNF founders are seasoned backers of the Buddhist cause. Tran ngoc Lieng was Minister of Social Welfare in the Ky government but resigned to protest the government's policies. In 1967 Lieng held the Vice-Presidential spot on the Buddhist-backed ticket of General Duong van (Big) Minh, yet was denied participation in the elections. Vice-chairmen of the founding committee include Buddhist labor leader Nguyen van Cuot and pro-Buddhist Lower House Representative Pham Xuan Huy. Miss Tran Thi Lan, current head of the Buddhists' university students' movement, is also a leading member.

Some of Vietnam's most prominent intellectuals are involved in the PNF. Ly Chanh Trung, philosophy professor at Saigon and Dalat universities and eloquent spokesman for the young Catholic progressives, is one. Mrs. Ngo Ba Thanh, a professor-in-absence of the International School of Justice, who has served three of the past five years in jail for her long-standing support of a negotiated settlement, is another.

THE PNF STANDS FOR a loosely defined and somewhat mind-boggling concept of neutralism. Its original declaration said that PNF demands for cease-fire, reconciliatory government, free elections, and troup withdrawals were based on three preconditions:

(1) The war is militarily unwinnable.

(2) The longer the war continues the more destructive it will be to the Vietnamese nation.

(3) Because of the war the people are gradually losing the right to determine their own destiny, making it imperative that they "join forces to solve the problems of their own future in peace."

In response to President Thieu's six-point plan of July 11, 1969, the PNF issued a statement that said in part,

> A coalition government composed of warlike factions with conflicting positions does not meet the above requirements, because the opposition between extremist factions in the government will ruin its efficiency. . . . we advocate a Reconciliation Government composed of nationalist elements acceptable to all sides concerned, to play an essential role in holding free elections under observation by an international body. . . . [And again:] We advocate reconciliation of Nationalists who are neither Communitsts nor stooges to the capitalists, and who struggle for the people's basic necessities of life and for the sovereignty of the people.

But things became cloudy again with a later resolution:

> We advocate a government of *Reconciliation*. This government is not necessarily neutralist in ideology but must have the power and the ability to hold free elections in a truly democratic fashion.

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In essence, so far as one can tell, what the PNF seems to be calling for is a non-Communist caretaker government free of U.S. apron strings and acceptable to the National Liberation Front. But there seems to be an unresolved contradiction between the pacifism of some members of the founding group and the sophisticated anti-Communism of others. "It is time to end this and let the people choose—let the real political forces decide . . . the war has gone on long enough," said one of the group's members. "If the Nationalists do not get together in the interest of the people's cause—true peace and freedom—we stand no chance against the Communists," said another.

The close connection between Tran ngoc Lieng and General Duong van (Big) Minh and recent meetings between leading members of the PNF and the General give credibility to the notion that the PNF has Minh in mind to head a caretaker government. Leading members do not discourage this kind of speculation; they point to the wide base of public support enjoyed by the General.

The PNF is the first to admit that its caretaker formula has been rendered more difficult by the creation of the NLF's Provisional government. "It is an irreversible step," said one leader. "They are recognized by 23 countries. They are now a quasi-legal entity. There can be no solution until this government also descends to quasi-legal status. There is no hope anymore of making the change within the political-legal framework of the present constitution. There must be a complete change, a new government, also with provisional, quasi-legal status."

The single set-back the PNF has suffered to date is that Thich tri Quang has not endorsed it, and it is thereby denied access to much Buddhist organizational support. Tri Quang has made it known here that he favors a new government headed by Big Minh with Au Truong Thanh (Lieng's law partner and a former Minister of Economy who went to France a year ago to avoid imprisonment for his neutralist views) as Prime Minister. Tri Quang is said to be holding back, waiting for the right time. However, discord between the Buddhists and some of the young progressives may also be a reason.

On May 9, a month before the founding of the PNF, Duong van Minh met with eight retired generals at the home of General Tran van Don. These were the "Old Generals" who overthrew Diem before being themselves overthrown by the interim strong man, Nguyen Khanh. Since the meeting of May 9, speculation has had it that Minh and Don are plotting something. A Buddhist-backed alliance between Don's National Salvation Front and the pro-Minh PNF is not ruled out and is generally thought to be a formula for power.

But neither the PNF nor anyone else will get to first base in Saigon without at least a U.S. go-ahead. And it is probably in part thanks to tacit American protection that the PNF has got a good start. If the Americans choose to protect the PNF from the right-wing elements they support and if they are wise enough to keep their own hands off the infant movement, there may yet be a meaningful Third Force in Vietnam.

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Jean Bloch-Michel

Between Pompidou and the CP

IF WE SET ASIDE the events of May 1968 (how aberrant they really were becomes increasingly evident), we may wonder whether it does not take a world war or the jolts of decolonization for France to lose her electoral equilibrium. The moment the political situation returns to normal, traditional structures reappear—not entirely unchanged, but continuing in the same evolutionary pattern that has been developing over a fifty-year period and that persists, despite many shocks, sometimes in subterranean ways.

The "non" vote that defeated the reforms proposed by de Gaulle's last referendum can be ascribed to numerous circumstantial factors—not to mention their antidemocratic, somewhat Maurrassian aspects, which most voters did not clearly detect. Primarily the "non" vote expressed both the voters' refusal to institute far-reaching reforms in the absence of a crisis, and their wish to return to traditional political habits and practices in the context of new institutions.

In the balloting pattern of the referendum André Siegfried would have recognized permanent characteristics of French politics—not unchanged, to be sure, but pursuing a consistent evolutionary pattern. Though for different reasons, the south and the southwest, the large industrial sectors of the Paris suburbs, the north, and the west (sometimes, as in Nantes and St.-Nazaire, isolated sectors in areas where a contrary opinion holds sway) —all give support to the left. Most of the big cities in the east and the west, the regions where Catholicism has remained most vital, vote for right and center, with the unpredictable exception of Marseilles. The mining regions of northern, northeastern, and central France, which were formerly bastions of Socialism, are now slipping over to the right as the coal industry is diminishing in importance, pits are closing down, and the miners no longer constitute the politically active element in the population. The well-to-do and rich peasantry is split between center and right, thus adding votes to those of the poor peasantry of Brittany and the Véndee which, by reason of tradition, Catholicism, and in some cases duress, casts its vote for the right. However, poor peasants in the less developed and fertile regions—the south, southwest, and south-central France (Massif Central)—vote left and sometimes, as in the Creuse, Communist.

In no sense, therefore, was the defeat of the referendum a victory for the left; it represents simply a return to traditional political habits. The moment there was no crisis, such as those of 1958 or 1968 which seemed to require recourse to General de Gaulle, and the moment the objectives of Gaullism no longer coincided with those of the right and center, voters reverted to their old, if now slightly modified, ways.

This also holds true in part for the election of Georges Pompidou to the presidency. Pompidou won the support of only 37 percent of the French electorate. His election can be construed as a success for the right and the right center and, even more, as a defeat for the left. But it is really in no way a sign that the electorate is rapidly shifting to the right, as it did in the July 1968 elections which followed upon the events of that May. Nor is the defeat of Alain Poher at all surprising. As Maurice Duverger has demonstrated, the center, which Poher represented, can win only when it functions as an arbiter between left and right. But Poher *vs.* Pom-

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pidou represented center *vs.* right-and-center —with the left absent, as everyone knows.

This absence of the left—the absence of the non-Communist left vote in the first round of balloting, and that of the Communist vote in the second round—constitutes the most novel element of the situation. A number of questions arise in this connection: what does it mean that 23 percent of the electorate voted Communist? What does it signify that the CP issued an order to abstain—which is unique in the history of French Communism? and what has become of the great revolutionary, or seemingly revolutionary, tide of May 1968?

It is this last question we must try to answer first, but in order to do so we must move back in time. Many people, and in particular a number of the May revolutionaries, made the initial error of mistaking a revolutionary situation for a revolution. Although it is always disagreeable to quote oneself, I must refer to what I wrote after the events of May, in my book *Une Révolution du XXe Siècle:*

> The revolutionary situation in which France found herself could not lead to a revolution of the classical kind, with one class destroyed to the advantage of another and the victorious class seizing power. In the first place, it was not a class revolution. . . . Furthermore, the situation inevitably had to result in a confrontation between students and workers—or, more exactly, between young students and young workers on the one hand, and defenders of the status quo, the latter distributed among the so-called middle as well as the working class.

In rejecting the "revolution," the Communist party acted in conformity with the wishes of a majority of militants and rank-and-file voters who want no part of a revolution under any pretext. However, when the Gaullist government had virtually collapsed and the state's administrative machinery lay idle, the Communists also rejected the leftist government that was then proposed by Mendès-France. Thereby, they wrecked any possibility for the left to come to power and helped put de Gaulle back in the saddle. Thus, the May revolt could seem a pointless riot, ineffectual, without consequence or justification. After a passing upheaval, society returns to its old habits, and on the surface nothing has changed.

WE CAN FIND in this situation two characteristics of what the "twentieth-century revolution" is, and most probably will be, in industrialized societies.

(1) As France in May 1968 indicates, it is possible—in what appears to be a socially peaceful and economically favorable situation—that on the most trifling pretexts, violent movements will materialize which have their origins in social strata that are alienated by new forms of civilization rather than exploited by socioeconomic institutions of society.

(2) Depending on the degree of violence, these movements risk being followed by defensive reflexes on the part of the society they will have alarmed. However, such movements may also bring about an examination of conscience that will result in reforms (as the university reform in France), or attempts at reform (as, again in France, the attempt at "regionalization"), though such reforms may prove to be merely disguised self-defensive measures (as were, partly, the so-called "participatory" schemes).

Briefly, in industrialized societies, the "twentieth-century revolution" is, and perhaps will continue to be, much more a matter of revealing fresh alienations than of attempting, successfully or otherwise, to seize power—and this notwithstanding the mythology that animates, or the rhetoric that accompanies, revolutionary movements. Because these alienations are characteristic of an industrialized society—i.e., a scientifically organized and hierarchic society—they might quite possibly be identical in countries with widely dissimilar political systems. And

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alienation would be accentuated by authoritarian centralization, whether imposed by the right or by the left.

From this perspective we may assess the reasons that, at times perhaps unconsciously, underly the position the French Communist party has taken in the last year. They are obviously dictated by circumstances, but perhaps are also rather profound and, from the Party's point of view, justified.

In May 1968, at a moment when the Gaullist government was falling apart, thereby opening the way for a seizure of power not by the "workers" or by the "revolution" but by the left, the Communist party refused to support Mendès-France's attempt to form a popular front; therein the Party obeyed not only its own stricture against adventurism but also its perennial fear that such a social democratic effort might succeed. More and more it seemed, as later developments proved, that the Party wished to maintain a Gaullist or Gaullist-like regime in the context of a capitalistic system, where it could make out more easily than in any attempted "socialism with a human face." A Gaullist regime would also supply assurances in the area of foreign policy that the Party could not expect from any other government in France.

Therefore the CP's position at the time of the presidential elections was entirely consistent. With no enthusiasm, and with full awareness that only a formality was involved, the Party insisted that "a single candidate from the left" be designated. But it was unwilling for that candidate to be Mendès-France, the only man who stood a chance and brought with him firm views. It is likely that the Socialist party and the supporters of Mitterand would have had to agree to his candidacy. However, once this candidacy proved impossible, the way was open for other "combinations" that were less sordid but were fated to fail, given the candidacy of Poher, whom the Socialists supported on the first round because they were eager to secure for the second round a non-Gaullist who would not be the candidate of the Communist party.

Faced with these distinctly unattractive "combinations," the left split between a center left that voted for Poher even on the first round and a left that, although not Communist, voted for Duclos because he was the only leftist candidate who could rack up a good score. The non-Communist left, already hard hit by the events of May, thereby received a fresh blow. However, we are here considering a presidential election, and I think it possible that a parliamentary election would have restored traditional party alignments, for they were more firmly rooted locally than they appear to be today. (The balloting on the referendum reflected this more clearly than did the election of Pompidou.)

Now to the Communist party's order to abstain in the second round of voting. Never had the Party taken such a position; it had always given its votes to Radicals and right-wing Socialists, calling for support of the "most democratic" candidate. The CP had supported such candidates as the late Robert Lacoste (former Minister for Algerian Affairs), Max LeJeune, a Socialist partisan of a French Algeria, and indeed Guy Mollet.

But it was now a question of a presidential election. The CP's order to abstain seemed to be a response to moral scruples. "One does not choose between cholera and the plague," Duclos had said. By abstaining the Communists blasted what hopes Poher might have had and insured the election of Pompidou. In other words, the CP came to the aid of the right and center-right, against the center-left and a segment of the left. If one discounts the motive of political morality—and the Communist party has never shown undue concern on that score—one recognizes that the Party *preferred* Pompidou to Poher. The CP preferred a solid government, based on a seemingly stable majority, to one that would have to dissolve both chambers, with no assurance whatever of winning a cohesive majority in the ensuing elections. As in May

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1968, and in response to the unexpressed wish of its voters, the CP again opted for order and stability and for the rejection of social democratic reforms. A Poher government would obviously have been more European-minded than Pompidou's (though the latter is that too), and, in particular, more Atlantic-minded. Nothing gainsays the possibility that a Poher government, relying on the center and on a left traumatized by the Czech experience, would have been somewhat aloof from the U.S.S.R., whereas the *Realpolitik* of the right—and with a cynicism for which it is not censured—allows it to overlook what Michel Debré used to call "a little traffic mishap" along the road toward East-West rapprochement.

By acting on this political analysis, the Communist party ran the risk of total isolation on the domestic political scene. But what does "isolation" signify when it includes one-fourth of the electorate? Who on the left is isolated? The party that received 23 percent of the votes, or the party that collected 8 percent? The Communist Duclos or the Socialist Deferre? The Communists knew that the chances of success for "a single candidate from the left" had eroded. However, if that candidate had brought a sufficient number of the right kind of pledges, the Party would have accepted him; lacking them, he was rejected. Mitterand, yes; Mendès-France, no. In these circumstances, the CP, strengthened by its enormous success, was indifferent to the threat of "isolation"—an isolation that would be very much like that of the drunkard in the well-known story who, in the middle of the Place de la Concorde, circles around the grillwork that encloses the obelisk, shouting, "They've shut me in!" The CP now will forget the presidential election in order to prepare for the parliamentary elections and the local contests that may enable it to become more firmly rooted throughout the nation.

The non-Communist left will be hard put to combat the CP. On the one hand, because it is weak and divided where its opponent is strong; on the other, because of what "post-Gaullism" promises to be. The composition of the new government and its leader's initial statements enable us already to discern its main features.

Let us disregard such electioneering rhetoric as "innovation and continuity" and try to sort out a few of the facts. The removal of Edgar Faure from the Ministry of Education signifies that the new administration is determined to restore "order" in the university system. Except for some student groups—leftists and others who are aware of what can be achieved by a reform that is at once incomplete, hasty, but attractive—this program will satisfy everyone, including the Communists. This is an important point, given the events of May 1968 and the distortions they suffered as reportage passed through the various propaganda mills.

THE NEW REGIME'S economic policy will be conservative; contingency measures will be adopted that will enable people, without sacrifices, to regain adequate if provisional economic security. Here again, policies will be designed to satisfy everyone. A policy of austere reform à la Mendès-France would have been ill received, and certainly everybody has had enough of the semblance of "leftism" under de Gaulle. Now that there is no more question of "participation," employers are reassured, and workers who, rightly enough, never believed in it anyway are not worried.

It is quite possible that the country is entering a period of tranquility such as the center has been able to provide for it in the past, usually by postponing the solutions to the big problems. After all, under the Pinay administration France had less social conflicts than during any other period in the history of the Fourth Republic.

The left now is in danger of being doomed to total impotence. It no longer commands strong organizations; its followers seem to melt away and split between the center and the Communist party. Given the present situation of the left and the nature of the French

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Communist party, any "union of all the left" would be merely a verbal sham and would amount to the non-Communists letting themselves be absorbed by the CP. Very likely, side by side with the CP, the left will continue to play the absurd role leftist Gaullists play within Gaullism: virtuous and futile protest will be its lot. The action will be led by others.

Between a Communist party that is becoming more "radical" but is determined not to claim or take power, and a center-right that is *in* power and, by force of circumstances, finds itself carrying out "leftist" measures (such as the university reforms), the enfeebled non-Communist left seems to have no immediate future. The left-socialist PSU (Parti Socialiste Unifié) and its clubs will continue to be centers of interesting and often useful intellectual activity, but will have no true hold on the country. And the new Socialist party which, as Mitterand so rightly said, "was born a centenarian and died before it had lived," could acquire stature only on two conditions, neither of which seems likely to materialize soon: either the complete elimination of the cadres of the old SFIO (Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière—the Socialist party led by Guy Mollet), or the formulation of a new governmental program that sets forth reforms and manages to persuade the electorate they are necessary—without, however, alarming anyone. This is not going to come about tomorrow.

Translated by ADRIENNE FOULKE

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Allen Guttmann

Orwell Among the Liars

SPAIN made all the difference. Describing in 1946 his own evolution as writer and as political man, George Orwell commented that he had been confused and uncertain until about 1935, but "the Spanish war and other events in 1936–37 turned the scale and thereafter I knew where I stood."

Before going to Barcelona and impulsively joining the militia of the POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista), Orwell had experienced poverty and had used it as the main theme of his first book, *Down and Out in Paris and London,* but he had made his adventures into literature rather light-heartedly. The impoverished men and women of the rue du Coq d'Or are portrayed as a curious collection of rogues and scamps, each with a story and a part to play, like characters from Dickens. Orwell had been quite able, in 1933, to describe the dismal hardships he endured and to transform them into picaresque episodes. Detailing his experiences as a dishwasher, he remarked upon the wall separating dining room from kitchen: "There sat the customers in all their splendor—spotless table-cloths, bowls of flowers, mirrors and gilt cornices and painted cherubim; and here, just a few feet away, we in our disgusting filth." There was then, however, apparently no desire to smash down the wall. In *Homage to Catalonia,* Orwell wrote, "A fat man eating quails while children are begging for bread is a disgusting sight, but you are less likely to see it when you are within sound of the guns." There is a world of difference between the two observations.

Although the English sections of *Down and Out* are less larky than the French, there is little sense of systematic injustice and certainly no demand for revolution. The conclusion undercuts whatever indignation the reader might have felt: "My story ends here. It is a fairly trivial story, and I can only hope it has been interesting in the same way as a travel diary is interesting." Although Orwell had already used his diary for essays and was to use it again for his second novel, *A Clergyman's Daughter,* he did not, before the Spanish war, see the political relevance of his painfully acquired experiences within the culture of poverty.

In the early months of 1936, at the instigation of his publisher, Orwell went to the north of England and investigated the lives of British miners, then hard-hit by the Depression. *The Road to Wigan Pier* is a more thoughtful and less superficial book than *Down and Out in Paris and London.* Orwell was obviously upset by the squalid lives of men neither tramps nor cripples, men who were brave, skillful, hard-working (when they had work), and miserable. He admired their physical strength, their ability to endure almost unendurable conditions. He was angry at their exploitation by absentee owners. He was, in other words, prepared for Barcelona. In Spain, he realized fully and finally that hunger is a moral and political problem as well as a physical one. In Spain, he understood, as if in a moment of religious conversion, that something might be done. The train ride to Spain seemed itself almost a ritual, a preparation for a new kind of experience if not for a rebirth: "In the morning, as we crawled across southern France, every peasant working in the fields

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turned round, stood solemnly upright and gave the anti-Fascist salute."[1] The solidarity of the peasants was a preview of Barcelona, where the revolution seemed to have taken place.

He wrote back to England, "I have seen wonderful things [and] at last really believe in socialism, which I never did before." It is all set down in *Homage to Catalonia,* the best of his books. His marveling descriptions stick in the mind: it was a world where everyone wore overalls and shared a common fate, where "waiters and shop-walkers looked you in the face and treated you as an equal," where shoeshine boys refused tips and prostitutes organized a union. It was a vision Orwell never forgot, to which he returned again and again in essays and letters.

His conviction that he had at last begun to breathe "the air of equality" did not mean that he romanticized life in the trenches. *Homage to Catalonia* has been read (and written about) as if the book contributed to the *All Quiet on the Western Front* tradition of disillusionment, but the central fact is that Orwell continued to think that the struggle against Generalissimo Franco was justified *despite* mud, cold, hunger, lice, and the pervasive stench of excrement.

It was the lies, and not the lice, that brought him to the verge of despair. As an unwilling participant in a civil war within a civil war, Orwell discovered that "the left-wing press is every bit as spurious and dishonest as that of the Right" (with the honorable exception of the *Manchester Guardian*).

The particulars of that civil war within the Republic, the "May Days" of 1937, are still uncertain. But it seems generally established that, in order to increase their influence within the Republic, the Stalinists—Spanish and foreign—acted against the allegedly Trotskyite POUM and, to a lesser degree, against the Spanish anarchists of the Confederación Nacional de Trabajo. These actions, military as well as political, were then systematically misrepresented as defensive measures taken as a result of a consciously pro-Fascist, attempted coup on the part of the POUM. Orwell was enraged. "It is not a nice thing to see a Spanish boy of fifteen carried down the line on a stretcher, with a dazed white face looking out from among the blankets, and to think of the sleek persons in London and Paris who are writing pamphlets to prove that this boy is a Fascist in disguise." Thanks partly to Orwell, the Stalinist propaganda is generally discredited, but Orwell's initial efforts to publish his version of what he saw in Spain intensified his conviction that the very idea of objective truth was endangered.

The story of these initial efforts can be followed in his letters. His publisher, Victor Gollancz, who also ran the Left Book Club, rejected *Homage to Catalonia* before Orwell began to write it. He had heard that Orwell's opinions were unsound. Sections of the book were subsequently turned down by *The New Statesman* because Kingsley Martin, then editor, found Orwell's anti-Stalinism politically objectionable. When Orwell reviewed Franz Borkenau's excellent book, *The Spanish Cockpit,* thrown him as a sop, Martin refused to run the review he had commissioned. The piece, suggestively entitled "Spilling the Spanish Beans," came out in the *New English Weekly. Homage to Catalonia,* once published, was not exactly admired on the Communist and pro-Communist left. In short, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* began in 1937.

There is nowadays a tendency on the right, at least on the literate right, to exploit Orwell's later books for their anti-Stalinism. There is a contrary tendency on the left to argue that *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* condemn totalitarianism, Fascist as well as Communist; but a

[1] The reminiscence appears in an essay reprinted for the first time in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell,* ed. by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, 4 vols. (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968). My references to essays and letters are taken from this excellent edition.

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lengthy study of Orwell's collected letters and essays makes this argument untenable. Instinctively and intellectually, Orwell was undoubtedly a committed socialist and an anti-Fascist, but his horrified rejection of Stalinism was, in his last years, more intense than his hatred of Hitler. The reasons are not entirely clear. Among them are probably the sense of betrayed possibility, in the U.S.S.R., and the worried fear that British socialism might also lead to tyranny. But the fact is that Orwell's life, from 1937 to his death, was largely devoted to a vendetta against left-wing intellectuals, against what seemed to him a witless conformity no better than a lie. If we intend to pay him homage, we must follow his example and face plain facts.

There were, of course, good political reasons for Orwell's disgust with British Communists. The about-face of 1939, occasioned by the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and the similarly puppet-like jump-to-orders executed in 1941 were nearly as absurd as the moment in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* when the Party's spokesman switches in mid-sentence from a denunciation of Eurasia to a condemnation of Eastasia. Intellectuals justified the betrayal of intelligence. They ran together in packs. "A modern literary intellectual lives and writes in constant dread—not, indeed, of public opinion in the wider sense, but of public opinion within his own group."

Similarly astute was his analysis of the "transferred nationalism" of certain ideologues who displayed a positively chauvinistic approval of whatever the U.S.S.R. did, even as they automatically deprecated the policies of their own government. Orwell's objections to pacifism are harder to accept. Nonetheless, when he contended that a refusal to fight against Hitler made Hitler's task easier, he was not unreasonable. The pragmatics of pacifism have always been problematical.

The political factors do not, however, account for the passion of Orwell's invectives against the "pansy Left." His frequent abuses of T. S. Eliot and C. S. Lewis and the "Roman Catholic clique" (Belloc, Chesterton, and their epigoni) are seldom as ardent or as personal as his polemics against leftist intellectuals. In the bitterness are traces of disillusioned love.

THERE WAS ALSO the lonely anxiety of the outsider. One might well wonder, did Orwell become an outsider because he refused to lie or did he see certain truths because he was by nature an outsider? Considering his autobiographical writings, especially the moving narrative of his wretched schooldays, *Such, Such Were the Joys,* I am tempted to say that he was temperamentally an outsider. Sociologically he was a man apart—Anglo-Indian among the British-born, poor boy among the rich, autodidact among the university-trained.[2] Returning from Spain and moving out of the leftist literary circles in which he had begun to play a part, he reverted to his natural role.

Still another factor is relevant. Throughout Orwell's work, one encounters a determined anti-asceticism. The mean denials of the miserly, the repressive legislation of the moralistic and, especially, the politically motivated abnegations of the idealistic—these actions seemed foolish, needless hardship in a world where unavoidable pain was already the common lot.

Gandhi, especially, bothered him. Taking up the problem at length in "Reflections on Gandhi," Orwell characterized his doctrines as otherworldly and inhumane. "No doubt alcohol, tobacco and so forth are things that a saint must avoid, but sainthood is also a thing that human beings must avoid."

In the face of joyless conformity and principled self-denial, he defended our deviations into the little pleasures that make life bearable. It is only in the weekly column

[2] In Orwell's first novel, *Burmese Days,* we can see that his disgust for the *lies* of Po Kyin is more central than his condemnation of imperialism. The novel is even more centrally about the fate of John Flory, the outsider.

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he wrote for the London *Tribune* that we can see how deeply and persistently he valued simple pleasures—flowers, cups of tea, cosy pubs, warm days, quiet moments. Writing, for instance, of Thackeray's novels, he discussed the "atmosphere of surfeit" and revealed his own respect for "oysters, brown stout, brandy and water, turtle soup, roast sirloin, haunch of venison, Madeira and cigar smoke." Orwell was not one to sneer at the *civilisation de consommation.* The trouble with material goods is not that they are bad in themselves but that they are hoarded by the wealthy—by the Colonel Blimps of Orwell's England, by Napoleon and his fellow pigs (in *Animal Farm*), by the members of the Inner Party (in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*). As Orwell observed, the poor seldom praise poverty.

Another facet of Orwell's rejection of asceticism was his shameless delight in the mild pornography of popular art. This is, of course, the theme of the famous essay, "The Art of Donald McGill," in which Orwell praises postcard art of the fat-lady, newly-wed, pants-down genre. Heroism may be necessary, may even be the rule, but "the other element in man, the lazy, cowardly, debt-bilking adulterer who is inside all of us, can never be suppressed altogether and needs a hearing occasionally." The final dramatization of this opinion occurs in *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* where the Party systematically institutionalizes sensual (and especially sexual) repression, where Winston Smith's adultery is a political act, brash defiance of a pleasureless status quo.

Cups of tea and genial jokes about common foibles: these are among the values summed up by the single word that Orwell set against the lexicon of totalitarianism—decency. Frightened by the intolerant fanaticism of at least some of the intellectuals, Orwell looked hopefully to the simple, inexplicable decency of ordinary Englishmen. To his own surprise, he discovered in 1939 that he was—like the ordinary Englishman and unlike many intellectuals—a patriot. Although he had recently suggested that an underground opposition to the British government ought to be organized in the event of war, he now realized "the overwhelming strength of patriotism, national loyalty." Addressing others but speaking also to himself, he wrote in *The Lion and the Unicorn* that, "above all, it is *your* civilization, it is *you.* However much you hate it or laugh at it, you will never be happy away from it for any length of time. The suet puddings and the red pillar-boxes have entered your soul."

There was even a time of optimism. England fought Hitler and remained free. Crisis brought men together. If wartime mobilization did not destroy English liberties, there was at least hope that socialism might bring about equality without loss of freedom. Orwell had always known that socialism in itself was no panacea, but it provided (and provides) at least the possibility of improvement, which alternative doctrines did not (and do not). In other words, socialism seemed to Orwell necessary but not sufficient. Of course, socialists ought to be skeptical about their own commitments. Since visions are never wholly realizable, since utopia retreats mirage-like into the distance, since we can reduce but not eliminate the sum of misery, it is better to pursue our ideals moderately—lest we create their opposite. Whatever decency is, it is not fanatic. This, at least, was Orwell's position in the early 1940s.

The relative hopefulness of the war years vanished in 1945–49, the last years of Orwell's life. The reasons are, again, uncertain, but continual illness was undoubtedly a factor. The Communization of Eastern Europe was another. *Animal Farm,* which can seem a comic work because of the witty comparisons between barnyard squabbles and the history of the Soviet Union, is in reality a bleakly ironic book in the misanthropic spirit of Jonathan Swift, whom Orwell greatly admired. Not only does the revolution of the animals fail, it clearly

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never had a chance. Had Snowball (Trotsky) defeated Napoleon (Stalin), the quadruped population of Animal Farm was still obviously unfit for intelligent self-rule. The perversion of equality ("some animals are more equal than others") is, within the confines of the fable, based upon the natural inequality of the animals and is, one speculates, related to the inherent inequality of human talents. The inequality does seem necessary, but the falsehoods do not. What is truly wicked in Orwell's little world made cunningly of animals is the falsification of the past. The history of the revolution is continually revised and, given the inability of the animals to remember, recreated.

ACCORDINGLY, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* seems the culmination, the final statement of the fear first realized in Barcelona in 1937. Winston Smith rebels against continual supervision, against officially imposed asceticism, and against sadism ("If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—for ever"); but he rebels most desperately against the Party's dictatorial ability to control the present by an annihilation of the past.

It is therefore appropriate that Winston Smith functions within the "Ministry of Truth," that he be among the liars. The rewritten sections of Soviet publications are childish compared to the Ministry of Truth's ability to rewrite every copy of every extant document, and thus to prove the infallibility of Big Brother's predictions. "History has stopped," says Winston Smith, "Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right." The invention of Newspeak is simply the last link in a chain Orwell had already described in the essay "Politics and the English Language": the scientific creation of a language through which reality simply cannot be perceived. As a proponent of Newspeak boasts, "Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it." The "perfection" of the language is the disappearance of the distinction between the lie and the truthful statement. That this "perfection" is probably not attainable (in the world outside the novel) is not the point—Newspeak is closely enough related to contemporary tendencies toward political obfuscation. Chairman Mao might well dream of Newspeak.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* Orwell goes one step further. In moods of disillusionment, nineteenth-century Romanticism might still cry out with Matthew Arnold's melancholy speaker, "Oh love, let us be true to one another," but the Ministry of Love is now the place of darkness and torture. Years before the current social-psychological discussions of "brainwashing," the techniques were already familiar, partly through the work of Orwell's friend Arthur Koestler. Faced with the torture that was for him the ultimate—snarling rats about to tear his unprotected face to bits and shreds—Winston Smith screams for "them" to "do it" to Julia, to his partner in heretical sensualism. His love can then be transferred to the torturer: "He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother." Like the prisoners of the concentration camp, analyzed in Bruno Bettelheim's "Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations," Winston Smith identifies with that which destroys him.

Winston Smith lives in our imaginations, as the characters of Orwell's other novels do not. (It ought to be admitted that Orwell lacked the ability he admired in Dickens, the ability to create characters who move from the contexts of their creation into the ever-present world of myth.) If Winston Smith lives and accompanies us in our distress, it is because he is George Orwell *in extremis,* the imagined enactment of the essential truth of Orwell's life. There is, moreover, a sense in which Orwell himself lives on as a literary figure, like Dr. Johnson or, to instance a rather different

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kind of personality, Lawrence of Arabia. The pen name, "George Orwell," suggests that Eric Blair, born in India in 1903 and uncertain about what to do with himself, stepped aside for a more important person.

Orwell himself is undeniably the central actor of *Homage to Catalonia,* and of most of the essays by which he will be remembered. The career of the man has become exemplary, as if his life were an allegory. He has, with some justification, been talked of in terms that would probably have annoyed him greatly. He *was* exemplary, but he was no secular saint, and to measure him by impossible standards is to find him lacking.

He admitted to compensatory distortion in *Homage to Catalonia.* "Actually," he wrote to Frank Jellinek, "I've given a more sympathetic account of the P.O.U.M. [line] than I . . . felt, because I always told them they were wrong and refused to join the party. But I had to put it as sympathetically as possible, because it has had no hearing in the capitalist press and nothing but libels in the left-wing press." Working for the BBC in the 1940s, he was occasionally deceitful, as when he alleged that the Japanese planned an attack on the Soviet Union, which he seriously doubted.

He had, moreover, a narrow conception of truth and falsehood. Although he was never a member of England's literary Establishment, he had numerous friends who were fairly well-known as writers. He reviewed their books, they reviewed his. As he put it to Cyril Connolly, "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." (He tried to render a more or less disinterested judgment.)

His concern for the truth about society never led him to any serious interest in the social sciences. Although he mentioned Marx on occasion, his awareness of modern social theory was minimal. His knowledge of the work of Franz Borkenau is typical. The review of *The Spanish Cockpit* was the impetus for the review of other books. The insights are almost accidental. It is characteristic that the theorist whom he most frequently discussed, James Burnham, is of no intellectual importance.

Orwell's lack of concern with scientific methods, or even with the results of disciplined study, ruined many of his essays. His attempts to define nationalism are, for example, hopelessly amateurish: "Nationalism, in the extended sense in which I am using the word, includes such movements and tendencies as Communism, political Catholicism, Zionism, Antisemitism, Trotskyism and Pacificism." The phenomena Orwell lists are actually varieties of emotional allegiance, under which head nationalism itself can be included. Essays like "Notes on Nationalism" are a negative contribution to human understanding.

In other words, he saw in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the modern capacity for the scientific falsification of reality, but he never understood that rational inquiry provides at least the possibility of precise knowledge about social behavior. During the Spanish Civil War, academic periodicals offered their readers—among whom Orwell was not to be counted—a far more adequate interpretation of the conflict than was to be found in newspapers or in the great majority of polemical journals. A similar situation holds today, apropos the Vietnam war.

For Orwell, however, the language of social science seemed rather an obstacle to truth—which it sometimes is. He assumed that we are all quite aware of the distinction between truth and falsehood and that the intention to deceive can be more quickly detected if we all return to a simpler, more straightforward kind of English. His position was, in short, a relatively naive one. And yet, in our own time of troubles, his awkward, quizzical, indignant decency may well be as useful as the models of modern social thought. It is easier to learn statistics and to program computers than it is to keep your head when those you love are losing theirs.

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Erazim V. Kohák

Turning On for Freedom

The Curious Love Affair of Sex and Socialism

MY TITLE is not a misprint. The liaison between sex and socialism, though of long standing, has always been more an affair than a marriage. Except for occasional outbursts of passion, neither partner has been particularly eager to acknowledge the relationship. I am not thinking simply of minirevolutionaries whose buttons proclaim MAKE LOVE NOT WAR. They are at least half in earnest, but anyone who has ever borne arms can attest that the two activities are by no means exclusive. Not only love but death can be a great aphrodisiac.

There are other straws in the wind. Recently I came across an ad in an "underground" journal, in which a self-confessed Portnoy advertised for an "uninhibited F companion interested in *Zen, astrology, existentialism, socialism or anything mod.*" I would have passed it over with a chuckle; but in the same journal the editor proclaims —quite seriously—that a silly bit of sadistic burlesque called *Che!* is "the *Communist Manifesto* of the now revolution." God help the revolution and, for that matter, sex!

There have been sexual revolutions before, as in England under the Regency or in Germany under Weimar. Sex, it seems, is good, wholesome fun but a bit monotonous; it needs occasional sparkling with a Cause. Yet in the past, sex has usually come out of its excursions into Social Significance somewhat battered—though still a favorite. I am not at all sure, however, that the same can be said of social progress. Its excursions into ecstacy have been followed by Queen Victoria in one case, by Adolf Hitler in another. Historical analogies are not an argument, but our experience with *Das Kapital* suggests that it is never wise to pin social progress to any one blueprint, and it might be well to ask what the effect would be if that blueprint came from *The Amorous Drawings* of the Marquis von Bayros.

Plato included community of women among his proposals for a commune-ist society. Budding radical historians regularly supply their over-35 teachers with term papers presenting Plato's *Republic* as an institutionalized sex orgy. But that is a generous misreading of the text. Plato was something of a puritan, both in his preoccupation with the passions and in his distrust of their effect on society. Like his Soviet successors, he was careful to banish all art that might arouse the passions, reserving a grudging place only for early versions of Socialist Realism and Lawrence Welk. His communal mating arrangements were certainly not designed to foster sensuous enjoyment or sexual freedom; their purpose was to protect society from passion, to restrict sex to the clinical function of assuring survival of the species. The tone is quite grim—the only thing gay about Plato was his attitude to male homosexuality. And even that was due less to any regard for sexual freedom than to his acceptance of the mores common to the Athens of his day.

Nor is Plato so unusual. In their everyday attitudes, socialist writers have regularly taken over the prevailing mores of whatever group in society was most receptive to their

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doctrines. In their prescriptions for the new society, however, they have usually shared Plato's distrust of passion. Marx is no exception. His Victorian contemporaries may have picked out "sexual communism" as by far the most intriguing feature of *The Communist Manifesto* and accused the Communists of having a more varied sex life than they themselves could manage but, again, the text tells a different story.

Marx, we find, does not advocate sexual communism. He accuses the bourgeoisie of having inflicted it upon the wives and daughters of the proletariat. Nor does he thank them for it as a blessing in disguise. He is indignant, and like his detractors he, too, suspects the class enemy is having far more fun in bed than is decent, seducing not only the poor working girl but each others' wives as well. A proper Victorian, Marx disapproves.

So do his followers, if they speak of the matter at all. August Bebel's *The Woman and Socialism* turns out to be anything but a ribald classic. The communes Bebel foresees are incredibly bourgeois, cooperative arrangements of proper Victorian couples, designed to bring household technology to working-class families. Accepting Marx's rather primitive version of the labor theory of value, Bebel is convinced that actual muscular exertion is the only source of value. This places a rigid upper limit on the possible increase in the productivity of labor in value terms—a man can only work so hard. Bebel concludes that *individual* workers can never create enough value to bring the marvels of modern technology within their reach. As with Plato and Marx, not individual sexual freedom but socioeconomic necessity is the basis for his commune-ism.

With the coming of the revolution, matters changed little. The puritanism of the Bolsheviks is notorious. Russian revolutionaries regarded sex as reactionary; they fitted their women into ill-shaped overalls and banned such lures of the devil as cosmetics. The U.S.S.R., Cuba, or the People's Republic of China aspire to match and surpass the capitalists in steel production, but none has the least intention of matching and surpassing even so modest a target as the *Playboy* foldout. Yet the intuitive association of sex and socialism survives all disclaimers. The relationship between sex and socialism may range from legal separation to sodomy, but it is still very much with us; and it requires explanation.

It is not particularly difficult to explain the sex phobia of some socialist theoreticians—and Communist dictators. Though willing to utilize whatever unrests are present in society, including sexual frustration, they are committed not simply to fostering change but to guiding and controlling it. They are committed to building the perfect society and, among men, perfection is never spontaneous. Society is too complex a construct for that. Perfection, as Plato already recognized, must be guided and guarded, and passions are notoriously hard to control. Philosopher kings are puritans virtually *ex officio*.

The opposite phenomenon, the common-law marriage of sex and socialism, is a converse of the Platonic considerations. Socialism and commune-ism are a response to the breakdown of community between man and man. Starting with Feuerbach's *Gesamtmensch,* radicals have sought to end

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the vicious isolation of individuals—caught in the productive process, joined and separated only by a cash nexus—and to establish a genuine human community. Freedom of sexual contact provides a rather facile symbol for overcoming alienation among men. Even when socialist writers and rulers chose not to use that symbol, their hearers invariably supplied it, and not without reason.

But there is a long and doubtful step between symbol and program. Against the grim background of an outdated puritanism, it may be rather easy to regard every removal of sexual restrictions as a victory for freedom, brotherhood, and enlightenment. The American left, by and large, has yielded to this temptation. But while sexual freedom might seem an apt symbol of social freedom, it is not at all obvious that it is an adequate *program* for social action.

The sexual revolution seems to bring few of the boons promised by early pioneers who fought for progress in the darkest fifties by adopting gutter language in their classrooms. Dedicated pioneers at Berkeley or at the Grove Press may assure us that more of the same will produce something different, but their assurances grow daily less convincing. For myself, I would prefer to examine the basic premise—how valid is sex, not as personal pleasure or social symbol, but as a blueprint for progress?

I SUPPOSE we would all enjoy seeing an all-nude production of, say, Shakespeare's *Tempest*. In a fully-clad world, naked bodies do create a peculiar illusion of freedom, and it would be rather novel. But would it be progress? I doubt it. A naked *Tempest* might be fun, but an all-nude repertory theater would soon prove monotonous. Finally, skin is skin. Its initial dramatic impact might be considerable, but its dramatic possibilities would rapidly be exhausted. Costuming offers a far richer range of creative possibilities. Nudity is a possible form of costuming, and it was rather ludicrous to single it out for the Lord Chamberlain's special attention. But it is costuming which is basic and makes the richness and variety of the stage possible.

A play or, for that matter, a society may well have its roots in "nature"; but the freedom, richness, and imagination it offers its audience or its citizens are a product of art, the conventional elaboration of the natural minimum. A return to "nature" would impoverish the stage and society alike. To the extent that sexual freedom is equated with a "return to nature," it is as poverty-stricken and antihumanistic as primitivism. Freedom is a product of art, not of nature.

The appeal of nudity on stage and primitivism in society is not a function of any creative possibilities it offers, but rather of its apparent simplicity. Primitivism—the "return to nature"—in sex and society alike is an admission of inability to cope with the complexity of both society and costuming. For possibilities are always complex, and ambiguous. There is no possibility for good which does not entail the possibility of evil as well. By contrast, "nature" might offer few possibilities for genuine humanity, for freedom and imagination, but it does offer simplicity. What is natural is good, sex is natural, QED.

But how natural *is* sex? The sheer physical act of copulation may well be said to be natural, but it is also socially irrelevant. When sex becomes a symbol or is no longer a physical act but a relation between two human beings, it is no longer "natural" sex but human sexuality. As such, sex is clearly socially relevant—but it can no longer claim the innocence and simplicity of a natural phenomenon. Human sexuality, like all human activities, is highly conventional. It is socially relevant because it is a social act, and as such, it shares the ambiguity of all distinctly human acts. It can become a vehicle for *Todestrieb* as well as for *Lebenstrieb,* for the desire to dominate and destroy as well as to meet and love the other. Not

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by accident are love and death the two great aphrodisiacs of human sexuality.

This is the dilemma of any sexual revolution. If its program is simply sex as a physical act and its aim no more than quantitative increase in the number of individual acts of copulation *per annum,* then it is clear, unambiguous, but also socially irrelevant. If, on the other hand, it claims to free and foster human sexuality, it becomes socially relevant but also ethically ambiguous, a vehicle of destruction as well as of creativity.

PRECISELY BECAUSE sex can become a vehicle of death as well as of life, we can no longer sustain the simplistic liberal illusion that drew a simple line between repression (bad) and expression (good) of the sexual impulse. Repression can, of course, become a vehicle for *Todestrieb,* for the kill-joy impulse—one look at the hateful expressions in the faces of the defenders of decency is proof enough. But so can sexual expression. Not all sexual expression is necessarily the outcome of the impulse to freedom and joy. Masochism and sadism are the obvious counterinstance. In the terminology of pop revolutionism, sex can be "fascist."

I see a historical justification for this pop terminology. There was certainly nothing tepid or lifeless about the early Nazi movement. It was intense, passionate, thoroughly turned-on and existential, enough so as to satisfy Sartre's German alter ego, Martin Heidegger. The Nazi movement fairly reeked of sex. The Nazi hate sheet, *Der Stürmer,* was consummately pornographic, as crudely, openly, and inarticulately pornographic as the most underground publications of our time—and in rather the same way. The sexuality it dished out in issue after issue was of the sadistic/masochistic variety. Much as in the underground journals of our time, its aphrodisiacs were hate and death, and its pleasure was pain.

The editors of *Der Stürmer* were convinced that the orgy of destruction was justified by the nobility of the cause, an awakening, radicalizing of the German people—turning on—and that the object of its intended destruction, the German Jewry, was eminently worthy of destruction. Anyone who doubted it had sold out to the Jews. But aphrodisiacs have a way of surviving the passions they arouse. Hate remained after the sexual passions it aroused spent themselves in the Night of Long Knives, and once aroused, hate is unselective. Not only the Jews, but all of Europe, including Germany, fell victim to the sadomasochistic orgy of destruction.

The *Todestrieb*-sex of sadism and fascism does have a common basis in passion with the *Lebenstrieb*-sex of freedom and communion. But that minimal common basis does not make it any less antihumanistic, antisocial, and antisocialist. A joyless, brutal travesty like *Che!* and its journalistic counterparts have nothing to do with socialism, even though, like socialism, they are antipuritanical. They oppose puritanism with an orgy of sex as death, not with a celebration of sex as life.

The continuing hold of puritanism on American society cannot be explained simply as an arbitrary imposition on a healthy, happy society by a few vindictive puritans. The "system" sustains it, but it can sustain it only because a great many Americans choose it. Nor is their choice attributable merely to sloth or cowardice. Far more frequently, it is a rather unhappy choice of men who may not regard the tepid, lifeless propriety of bourgeois quasisexuality as a positive good, but who still see it as a lesser evil to the death-sex orgy of *Der Stürmer* or *Che!.* If the heightening of intensity in sexual passion comes to seem equivalent to a celebration of destruction, then even the choice of bourgeois propriety is not dishonorable. It may not make life free and full, but it makes it possible for the children who can laugh and play rather than die in gas chambers.

Still, the choice between not-quite-living and living-unto-death is at best a desperate

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choice. This is what gives an air of urgency and social significance to the quest for what, in our version of pop nomenclature, we could call "commune-ist" sex. The label has no doctrinal significance. It is at best a strained attempt to affirm the conviction that not only death but also love can be a great aphrodisiac, that intensification of sexuality does not have to mean only destruction of others, but can also mean a communion with others, a meeting of people where they live, in their bodies, a radical and free encounter.

The commune-ist sexual revolution can be found in the communes, rather reminiscent of the religious Utopias, which form in the eddies of the rat race. Perhaps three or four couples, sometimes married, sometimes not, share a house, incomes, children, troubles, pleasures, bodies. Often they share a project as well, tutoring underprivileged children, housing the homeless, feeding the hungry. They are very young, though not always in years, and very earnest, and they will tell you, pleadingly, that people are never as free and together as when all clothes and inhibitions come off and that people who share common work and life share common love as well.

Theirs is a rather idyllic vision, easy to sneer at, vulnerable to ridicule. But the freedom and reality of the men and women I know who have adopted this life-style is impressive. Perhaps they have found something. They are certainly convinced of it, convinced that they are acting out the perennial dream of a Peaceable Kingdom. They are convinced they have found the freedom their contemporaries grope for, and present their love-in—or, to give it its older name, *agape*—with their ability to lock loins where most men can at best touch fingertips.

Those of us who have lived a little longer and learned how much men can cheat with their bodies, how independent the barriers among men are of their clothes, might find the symbolism apt but the hope a little naive. Men's bodies can be naked but their souls fully clad and their daggers drawn. Yet such considerations are out of order now. Let us assume that men can in fact meet, with all barriers gone, once their clothes and sexual inhibitions are down. Let us accept for the moment the personal ideal of the commune of men completely "naked," completely open with each other. How valid is the commune-ist ideal, not as vision, but as blueprint for progress?

ODDLY ENOUGH, in considering the validity of the commune-ist ideal angelology can be more useful than economics. Angelology is of little value as a descriptive science: there is a dearth of empirical evidence. But for that very reason, it has many uses as a science of pure possibilities. Since presumably neither angels nor devils exist, angelology offers a unique opportunity for projection. And since the commune-ist ideal of complete nakedness, metaphoric as well as literal, proposes nothing short of a Kingdom of Heaven on earth, angelological projection becomes singularly appropriate.

Among angels, we can say, the ideal of a complete communion, a communal existence in which all clothes and barriers to human contact are removed, would be extremely appealing. The Bible tells us that the blessed in God's presence "neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven"—presumably live in a continuous love-in, completely open, completely available, and able to meet each other without the limitations of formalized sexuality. Since by definition they are completely free, secure, and good, they need hold nothing back.

By the same token, I suppose, devils never have sex. Being totally evil, devils become incapable of sex, for sex demands a degree of mutual trust of which devils are by definition incapable.

An embrace leaves one's back exposed—and devils could not resist the opportunity. They must get their kicks by reading de Sade and by torturing each other.

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Now as any angelologist can tell us, men are neither devils nor angels. They are not totally evil, and so are able to trust each other enough to lock loins and meet in love. At the same time, men are not angels, *per essentiam* and not merely *per accidens* as the Marxists would have us believe. We need not assume that they are evil, actively seeking to do harm one to another, though what we have called *Todestrieb*-sex suggests that they are also that, at least *per accidens*. But even if men are not evil, they are weak, and weakness is the *Urmutter* of cruelty. Frightened men will hurt each other, even without evil intent, simply out of fear.

Commune-ist visionaries will, to be sure, insist that their communes will change just that and produce a "new socialist man" who will be secure and free of fear. But even if, *per impossibile,* a commune were able to give its members such security that none would feel the need to strike out at the other, its members, unlike angels, would still not be omniscient. Men can hurt one another quite unwillingly, and hurt deeply. For angels, love-ins may be the *modus operandi;* for men they are at best a rather ambiguous *desideratum* precisely because in the case of men, being naked, literally and figuratively, means not only being wide open to communion but also being wide open to hurt. It takes a radical trust to be radically open, and among men there are severe limitations on trusting—not because men are unwilling to trust, but most of all because, not being omniscient, men are not unlimitedly trustworthy.

This is why, though a commune may be a symbol of a hope and even a tangible achievement of a few men and women for a very limited time, it is not an adequate model for restructuring society. Among men, clothes and inhibitions are not only barriers to communication, but also very necessary means of protection. Not only protection against ill will, but protection against folly. Lack of omniscience survives even in Walden II or a Soviet Socialist Republic. Alienation, as Milovan Djilas pointed out recently, is not only a source of frustration, but also the barrier which protects individual freedom.

AT MOMENTS, I can hear an echo of the different drummer whom my younger comrades hear in their communes. I wish them well, they are achieving something precious. I hope they keep the echo alive, and that we will not lose all ability to hear it. That deafness is what puritanism is all about, and it is death. Radical openness—commune-ism, if you wish—must remain as a perennial, insubstantial hope: the glimpse of the Kingdom. But I would hesitate to join them. Not for fear of being hurt, but for fear of hurting, because I am not all good and all wise. The ideal they are acting out is an ideal, not a blueprint for society. Man requires the protection of "clothes," barriers which not only bar but also protect.

This finally is the significance of the sexual conventions with which the young, unaware of their own capacity for hurting, are so impatient. Marriage is one such convention; so are the limitations, not imposed but formalized by society, on where, when, and with whom one can be radically open—and expect radical openness in return.

In this sense, the young are right—sex is the experimental working model for socialism. The commune-ist (and communist) vision of a society in which all "clothes" and barriers—the "bourgeois" freedoms and civil rights, the limitations of "formal" democracy—are removed and men are left entirely naked to each other is a perennial vision. Its appeal is its promise of radical commune-ion. Yet in practice the destruction of formal limitations has never created a society which could give its people bread, freedom, and justice. In every instance it has created a nightmare of men and societies broken and destroyed by well-meaning leaders who, even had they been all good, still were not omniscient. True believers may speak of these episodes as "deformations," but they are quite inevitable, a strict con-

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sequence of removing barriers which may bar men from perfect communion but also protect them from their own lack of omniscience.

Socialism for men rather than for angels, socialism with a human face, is finally the art and the science of creating barriers between man and man which offer the maximum opportunity for communication while providing the maximum protection against human ignorance and ill will. It becomes a deeply antihumanistic nightmare when it mistakes men for angels, and sees its sole task in removing all barriers among them.

I am not a fascist because I am not a devil, and because I believe that men can communicate and meet one another. But I am not a communist because I know that men are not angels, and cannot be trusted implicitly, not even in love. I am a socialist because I believe that conventions can be replaced, that they do not have to be strained and straining relics of an irrational past but can be molded and shaped rationally, in the service of human security and human freedom. I am a socialist and a democrat because I know that a radical ideal can serve men only if it can create conventions which do this.

This, finally, applies to sexual as well as to social revolution. Radicalization, social or sexual, is not an unmitigated good. It creates opportunities, but opportunities for destruction and death as well as for love and life. If it becomes a basis for a rational restructuring of social and sexual conventions in the service of men, it offers hope. If it becomes a basis for destruction of social and sexual conventions, it no longer matters whether the ideal it invokes is love or death. The result is the same.

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Robert Erwin

A Threat to Consensus

As I always tell my students at Johnson City University, it was not easy for educated Americans of the last century to throw off the yoke of European culture, especially that of British literature and opinion. In the first place, bindings were durable in those times, so there was little hope of father's books falling apart. Then, the British (and to a lesser extent the French and Germans), being what they are, had no idea what was happening. Thus Americans lacked the stimulus of the only relationship, other than a sale, of which they approve—a contest. Finally, hunting for and coaxing native literary talent took time away from enjoyment of such foreign masters as Bulwer-Lytton.

Yet free themselves from cultural imperialism our forebears did. In art and thought the true ground of the excellent is the good, or a high average level of performance, and the latter requires a supporting social framework. The distinctive American framework was eventually built so well that today we take the lyrical flights of a Herman Wouk and the exacting standards of a Bosley Crowther virtually for granted.

It is partly this taking for granted a hard-won achievement which leads me to emphasize to my classes that the United States had to *struggle* free of European ways. Partly also I feel that older and wiser counsel must inveigh against the dangerous foreign attractions the young are increasingly exposed to.

We all know what lies in wait for the young American on the rise to the intelligentsia from say San Quotidian, California. At some point, especially if he is poor in languages, he affects to carry the *Spectator,* the *Economist,* or some other British publication in a highly visible manner. One day when he actually opens an issue, he discovers what seem to him the exotic marvels of combat in print. Although America is a violent country, he may never have personally witnessed such brutality as is displayed around the English book review columns—surely not in widely circulated, commonly available periodicals. Says an author whose book was spat upon the previous issue:

> I can well imagine how Quigley happened to misquote me. In his incessant reviewing—almost a medical problem—he no doubt forgot which book he was devoting his customary quarter hour to.

A reviewer whose praise of a book last time was reviled by a correspondent has this to say:

> I fail to see how even simple geography can be taught to a generation, so-called, which rejects the admittedly human virtues of Mrs. Ormes's poetry. Do the very young and ignorant nowadays criticize the depth of oceans? Protest the location of continents?

The rule here seems to be maximum provocation and maximum retaliation. A second rule can be abstracted from the British review columns. Namely, the most expertise shall be lavished on the least important matters. Thus an essay on current foreign policy is damned for an inexact reference to the Canaanites. And the following sort of information is liberally supplied:

> Although your would-be authority does not mention it, Lady Alice who planted the tree by the inn was a cousin of that Dr. Arthur Jones who assisted in the movement to legalize exhumation.

By the time a callow American has figured out the rules, he concludes they can all be subsumed under one grand principle of never admitting you are wrong. This principle is adhered to at all costs.

> I of course meant to write Andrew Johnson rather than Andrew Jackson, and I am grateful to Professor Lansdowne, with his impressive knowledge of the colonies, for correcting a slip of the pen. Strikingly enough, the inadvertent transposition of names underlines my main point.

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As drama critic or in any other position, one stays on the attack:

> Mr. Leary's rather laborious citation of scenes, for heaven's sake, to reprove me for not noticing that Margaret is missing from the third act because she died in the second, may account for the absence of the character but does not justify it.

Until the recent development of an alarming trend, I did not worry whether my message took effect on students immediately. I simply tried to insure and hasten a recovery from foreign allurements that was probably going to come anyway with maturity.

Working for me I had the negative features of European style. It is undesirable for readers, writers, and editors to hold one another to account over words and ideas. This is all right in unpopular literary, political, and technical publications, because everyone knows these exist merely on the fringe of real life in America. But to carry on before the wider public in this vein introduces disagreement, perplexity, and involvement. More important, I had working for me the positive features of the American style. Instead of allowing arrogant and pedantic prima donnas to monopolize the letters-to-the-editor space, our publications are *representative*. For instance, if a certain news magazine receives 300 letters crudely classifiable as half in favor of a truce in Vietnam and half in favor of stepping up the war, it will print one hawk letter (for bombing), one moderate letter (for shelling), and one peacenik letter (for small arms).

Our publications properly recognize *private organizations*. A letter from the Friends of Cross Country Running, for example, automatically carries weight. Furthermore, American publications are not so bland as some people would have us believe. On the lower levels of power, where the *national image* will not be spoiled, some community newspapers, trade journals, and the like are quite open to sincere differences of opinion. After fluoride, say, has been proved effective and produced at low cost, an average individual's statement may help to prevent the children in his town from getting it.

In short, a background lesson from me, the unpleasant traits of European intellectualism, and the genuine advantages of the American way were supposed to reduce to a minimum impulses toward acerbity. The boy from San Quotidian could be expected to grasp the point well before he became a man with interesting lines in his face.

Now, however, a counter-trend, perhaps engendered by America's 25 years of foreign entanglements, has broken out. It can be observed above all in the *New York Review of Books*, where ever more intricate rejoinders unfold, composed in that cocksure manner which hitherto only radical youth flirted with. For that matter, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* appear to be admitting a lesser but still culturally upsetting amount of militancy to their columns. Assistant professors of xerography and even followerless persons from East Orange, New Jersey, may be found sounding off in letters to the editor, and not only in the publications named above. Little prescience is required to foresee the time when *Woman's Day* will be laden with bickering about condiments and *Reader's Digest* rent by unauthorized schemes for reforming death.

Seemingly a disciplined adaptation of European disputes would be feasible if we must have One World. After all, the sport of rugby was turned into the time-and-motion exercise of American football. But a simple hypothetical case shows the difficulties.

Let us suppose that the journalist Tom Wolfe visits Latin America for 48 hours and writes a book. His reviewer in *Playboy*, a political scientist from the RAND Corporation, lambastes him for saying that Pancho Villa conquered the Incas and that 99 per cent of Latin-American revolutions are Communist-inspired (whereas, according to the State Department, the true figure is 97 per cent):

> The counterproductive effect of Wolfe's data distortion may be compared to a dot situated on the lens of a film projector. It will be perceived on the screen as having the magnitude of a sizable disc. Since the year of Marx's birth, 718 revolutions have occurred in the area-designate, accepting Floesmann's typology. Thuswise Wolfe's putatively slight quantum inflation when projected on the continent looks not so slight insofar as it attributes the wrong causal agent to 14.36 revolutions.

The author's reply runs in part:

> You and I peel down the concourse any time and glim the scene. Introtypes, though, have

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to go step by step like an old guy with a hernia.
I've seen hairs split . . . but with a laser beam?
Out of sight!!!

Subscribers to the periodical in which these blows are traded have not read the book, and they are not going to read it. They only want a little information on the cheap. Did Pancho Villa conquer the Incas, and was he Communist-inspired? As long as all parties insist on their own interpretation, the question will not be settled. And as long as an essentially alien system is aped, there will be discord.

Formerly this sort of thing did not happen except in the limbo below five-figure circulation. There was a time when the RAND analyst would be teaching grammar and Tom Wolfe would not go to Latin America (except Havana). Had he written a book it would be reviewed by another journalist to defray a bar bill. If the journalist worked for a small-town newspaper, he would copy the blurb on the dust jacket for his review. If he worked for a big-city outfit, he would paraphrase the jacket.

A return to those traditions is urgently needed. Of course room for controversy exists in America. I myself have engaged in polemic in the *Rio Grande Symbolist and Cookout Review*. But it ought to be kept at the technical level in special media. Some nations do not conceive of the world primarily as an arena of right and wrong. They do not cultivate the efficient spirit which penetrates to the heart of a matter, telling us, for example, how many square feet Giotto painted. Therefore they can put up with interminable public exchanges in which no one is right and no one is wrong. We Americans can't—not without marring our superbly integrated culture.

●

The author wrote this article with the aid of a grant from the Friends of Cross-Country Running.

Now We Can
Breathe Easier Dept.

M'LUHAN ASSERTS BOOKS WILL GO ON

Tells Booksellers Alphabet
Is Basis of Civilization
—*New York Times,* June 3, 1969

Sebastian Franck

Reunion with Moscow

As THE CAR MOVES from the airport through the city, memories return: the giant village of two-story houses we saw 38 years ago is still there. Tall towers in Stalin's wedding-cake style now shoot up in-between every now and then, and long rows of new high-rise apartment houses line the arterial roads. But in the center of the city, on Kalinin Avenue, a modern representative boulevard springs up, with giant glass palaces, broad-windowed department stores, restaurants, movie theaters. The highest of the new glass houses is the building of CMEA (Council of Mutual Economic Assistance), at the beginning of the Avenue, quite beautiful, overlooking the Moskva River. It is not unlike the U.N. building on New York's East River, with its half-circular meeting-hall annex. Nearby is a hotel for the delegates, with a big restaurant. (Everything is smooth, modern, elegant, well-lit; in the hotel we have a suite—separate sitting room and bedroom, hall and bath—with furnishings contributed by Comecon-member states. A staff member of CMEA, showing me around that office building, comments, "Parkinson's Law: when we move into it, it will already be too small.")

But the strongest impression is still the same as 38 years ago: queues outside and inside the stores. To Western eyes the goods look scant and—with some exceptions—second- or third-rate. This goes even for the new stores on Kalinin Avenue, where the variety is larger but the waiting time no shorter. Why? As someone put it: the counter has become much too short.

Everywhere, Moscow gives the impression that masses of humanity are pouring into it. Streams of people flood the subway. The old-fashioned buses are so crowded that their doors don't shut. The restaurants are chuck-full, to say nothing of the stores. But the short counter is not the only explanation. There are at least two other reasons: a spirit of "who cares?" and bad organization. A third cannot be excluded: people are kept busy long after

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their working hours, especially since the stores are open till late in the evening and on Sundays. (To keep people busy, says a Pole, the movie houses are kept cheap. Long queues form in front of them, and black-marketeers offer you tickets as you come within reach of one.)

The treatment of buyers in the stores is shocking. Buyer and goods are kept as separate as possible. Touch anything, and you face an indignant salesman. Only one client at a time can try anything on; the others wait patiently. A hundred customers crowd around a stand with a single saleslady, while three bored salesladies mind another, whose wares attract no one. If you don't know the price of the article you want to buy, and have not taken the precaution of acquiring a sales slip, you wait still longer. But the people wait patiently. "Don't you have to wait in your stores?" asks my official guide, a young student, incredulously.

The longest queues are in the food and the clothing stores. But when a small wooden stall springs up in a street, a long queue forms immediately. Chickens may be offered for sale, or melons. Or take a two-story food shop in Kalinin Avenue: there is a self-service department on the upper floor. We take an escalator up; a woman sits at the entrance and marks the goods we have brought in. Only cheaply-packaged goods are on sale here: soups, sauces, soaps, etc. You choose and go to the cash register to pay. On the other side is the downward escalator with another woman, and another queue. Why? She is checking the contents of the shopping-bags against the sales slips.

The sad offerings of fruit and vegetables are of the worst quality. The apples or carrots on sale can hardly be imagined. Better—and more expensive—ones are said to be available in the peasant markets on the outskirts of Moscow. But almost all prices look high, when measured by the income of the shoppers, let alone by the official course of the ruble. Clothes and milk are especially dear. Starved-looking chickens cost 2.80 rubles per kilogram—and the average monthly income is about 120 rubles. Certainly, rents are low; but most Muscovites still have to share a small apartment with another family. The doctors, strangely enough, are said to have a monthly income of only 90 rubles—unless they are willing to move to Asia. They can double their income by working two practices. A high East German diplomat confirms this; only, he says, these are not real doctors—they merely confirm that you are sick, so you can be quickly taken to a hospital to be examined or treated by a "Professor." He also says it is all a matter of bad organization. He himself couldn't keep going if he couldn't order goods by phone (which is, of course, possible only for those who are more equal than others). His final remark is that one must get used to the fact that the Czarist bureaucracy is still alive in Moscow.

A BIG HOTEL with 29 floors and over 1,000 rooms is a good example of "organization." It takes 5 to 10 minutes to get from the 15th floor down to the lobby. A 10-minute break is not enough to get yourself a cup of coffee; you need 20 minutes. You stand in a long queue until you reach a woman with a coffee machine. She not only serves the coffee and takes the money, she also has to run to a glass cabinet where the customers (most of whom do not speak Russian) point out to her which kind of sandwich they want. The distance between the coffee machine and the glass cabinet suggests that the customer should appear before the woman, sandwich in hand—not to speak of the installation of a second coffee machine. In the restaurant you are warned that there will be a 20-minute wait for the soup of the day. Nor can you get it any earlier at the airport restaurant, even if you say—as we did—that your flight is due soon. One also has to wait for taxis, which (for the foreigners) are a necessity in Moscow. You may have to wait an hour or more in the after-theater rush. And even when you get a taxi, you still cannot be sure that the driver knows how to take you to your destination. There is no city street map (nor, for that matter, a Moscow telephone directory for private numbers).

It is also very unpleasant not to know what goes on in the world. Communist newspapers from all over the world can be had at the hotel; but they are soon gone. We usually buy *L'Humanité*. But on some days all we can get is *nyet*, probably because the paper has been seized by the censorship. English-speaking Rus-

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sians ask you: "Have you brought anything to read?" There are gaps, though, through which foreign literature reaches Russians. Translators can read modern books in their original language, so as to keep in touch. One of them remarks that he considers Saul Bellow's *Herzog* the most important book of our time. A delegate from an African country says at a professional meeting, "Some are more equal than others"—and the translator adds in Russian: "He is quoting an author widely read in Western countries."

One evening we are taken to the Café National. One suddenly feels no longer in Moscow but in St. Germain des Prés. Interesting faces, modern clothes. Our companion tells us, "The opposition used to meet here in Stalin's days." Yes, there is such a thing; but it is like an oilpatch on the ocean. As we walk at night along the empty streets and discuss Czechoslovakia, our companion says:

> Czech freedom of the press was the chief reason for the invasion which was, in any case, decided by a majority of only one vote. [Could that be true?] And what about the masses? They would surely tear us to pieces [meaning those in opposition to the government], if the men in power were to decide they should do so.

We have a similar conversation with an East German diplomat:

> The people here [he says] look at it this way: we have lost 150,000 men in order to take Czechoslovakia from Nazi Germany; we can't let it slip out of our hands. One must see the world as a whole. The bomb makes wars impossible; international confrontations are brought about more and more by political means, and Russia was in danger of losing power if it employed purely political means. The men in Prague went too far when they made the press free. You spoke of the German Democratic Republic as a country governed by terror. But in international confrontations governments must have control. Freedom, as the Czechs allowed it, exists nowhere. When I talk with Western journalists here, they tell me they would lose their jobs if they always wrote what they liked. And one must admit, besides, that de Gaulle was right when he did not tolerate student rebellion. . . .

THE GUM DEPARTMENT STORE and the tomb of Lenin are quite close to each other. GUM is unbelievable—a very old building with several floors of galleries from which one can watch a never-ending stream of people coming and going. The galleries have little stands with long queues of shoppers, and there must be tens of thousands of them in the building. Leaving the store one comes across another queue, some kilometers long, moving slowly toward Lenin's tomb. It must take hours to get there. A Russian friend tells us: "Every Russian peasant makes a pilgrimage to Moscow. He goes to see Lenin, walks in the Red Square, and shops at the GUM. He then has seen Moscow and goes home satisfied."

WE CAME HOME dejected. First, because people there have to live that way. They patiently queue and wait. If next year brings a little more than last year they are quite satisfied. Above all, they are so busy with their own affairs that the outside world has very little meaning for them. And second, because of the long rows they form to revere the body of St. Lenin. . . .

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A Volunteer Army: Pro and Con

We have received a number of communications from readers concerning the remarks of Henri Rabasseire in the May–June issue of DISSENT *about the proposals for a volunteer army. Some of these communications follow, with a reply by Mr. Rabasseire.*—ED.

Comment by Robert L. Hoffman

AMERICAN ARMED FORCES today, including as they do levies of conscripts, do *not* constitute an army of citizen-soldiers. They are *not* subject to effective democratic control. Elimination of conscription will *not* introduce a "mercenary army": *we already have one.* On the other hand, elimination of conscription can accomplish little of what many of its advocates hope for: most of the faults of the military system are rooted elsewhere and are not so easily eradicated.

The armed forces are run, and their tone and practices are set, wholly by professional career soldiers—mercenaries, if you prefer. Draftees and short-term volunteers can do little to affect the way the military system operates. Their presence may induce healthy modification in the attitudes and practices of their superiors, but an opposite process inevitably is the more significant in its consequences for *civil* society.

Let us review Mr. Rabasseire's theses, here paraphrased and abbreviated:

(1) *A volunteer army is a mercenary one, the "most despicable form of defense establishment."*

I would like to see some better explanations than I have yet heard why professional soldiers are worse than conscripts; I can think of some excellent contrary arguments. Earning one's livelihood as a mercenary may be morally reprehensible, but the worst military acts are performed by men because they are men, with their mercenary or amateur status hardly relevant. Because of this and because armies are controlled by professionals, the actual and potential evils of the military system can be significantly affected only in their secondary attributes by either continuing or abolishing conscription. I concede that to exclude the present leavening of draftees and "forced" volunteers may exacerbate some of the evils of the army's essentially mercenary character, but it can scarcely produce any major change.

(2) *A volunteer army would press into service those who have no other way of earning their bread, a "most humiliating" way of using people's bodies; and*

(3) *it would be an army of blacks, based on racial exploitation.*

These are valid objections; but do not forget that the armed forces are already accomplishing just these effects; draft abolition could only increase existing military exploitation of black men and poor whites. The trouble here is with civilian society, not the military. As an aside, some of us also think the draft to be a "most humiliating form of using people's bodies for commercial purposes."

(4) *A volunteer army would be the "willless" instrument of its commanders, to be used by reactionary governments against the people.*

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Oh, come now! What do you think the army is being used for now? An all-mercenary army may indeed be more dangerous in this respect, but with any army, denial to the state of this instrument of repression requires that soldiers rebel against their officers, or at least that they fail to act with as much force as ordered. Both intelligent reflection and historical experience lead to the conclusion that neither event will occur except under extraordinary circumstances, such as are likely to affect professional soldiers and draftees equally.

(5) *"A voluntary army is especially capable of being used in colonial wars, independent of the morale of the citizens and independent of any war aim or idea."*

This is a peculiar statement, in the light of our Vietnam experience. Availability of draftees made possible the kind of intervention we have undertaken there; public discontent with conscripts being sent to die in Vietnam became extensive and politically significant only when there was wide dislike of the war primarily for other reasons. Substantial antiwar sentiment would not have arisen if it had been a tidy little war, or a "victorious" one. Tidy little interventions might be more likely with an all-volunteer army, but the real controlling factors are political conditions that are otherwise determined. Maybe—and it is a thin hope—continuing the draft would help lead to a reversal of our interventionist foreign policy and its basis in popular anti-Communist hysteria, for the agonies of the conscriptive system strengthen and sustain antiwar pressures.

(6) *A volunteer army cannot defend national territory except through nuclear warfare, presumably because it is too small.*

This is no argument. Where defense of the home territory of a nuclear power is at stake, any war involving large forces will be a nuclear one, and universal annihilation the virtually inevitable conclusion.

(7) *A volunteer army will encourage further development of "push-button war" techniques, which is dangerous.*

It should be clear by now that the Defense Department and its weapons suppliers need no encouragement to *develop* the techniques. The restraints against their actual use in international crises are operative no matter what the size and composition of the armed forces, as long as there is a substantial nuclear "deterrent force." The dangers of push-button war are great, but their reduction has little or nothing to do with conscription.

(8) *Some intelligent and admired men have in the past "advocated the militia as the only means of assuring citizen control over the military establishment."*

They were wrong—wrong when they wrote and even more wrong with respect to the present American situation, which so ineptly but concisely is called the "military-industrial complex." We shall have to establish citizen control *outside* the army; there is no other way.

(9) *Many of the advocates of a volunteer army have dubious motivations and worse reasoning. Also, "Nixon is for it."*

One point of merit Rabasseire does not mention can be developed from his contention that fewer youths would have opposed this war actively if they were not liable to be conscripted into it, and others might have been less agitated. But that is just a comment on the problem of popular passivity. There would have been little opposition either to service in the war or to the war itself if it had been more tidy and "successful"; if we are to oppose such actions in the future, resistance to the draft cannot be the major stimulus.

(10) *Carrying the volunteer army idea to its logical conclusion would lead us to "farming defense out to commercial enterprise."*

I fail to see how our present system differs in any significant way from just this. We have war-making for profit and lack of firm control of the military by civil authority. What else could *condottieri* want, besides higher salaries? You can even get that now, if you are a retiring senior officer ready to transfer from the uniformed services to the industrial branch of the system.

ALL IN ALL, introduction of an all-volunteer army may have some serious, unhappy consequences, though they are likely to be minor matters by comparison with other military evils and their causes. However, consider the alternative, continuing the draft.

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In my view, the draft system is a major reason for the current disruption of American society. Draft-age youths now are agonized and angry, and so are many of their friends and families. This is not simply another of those unfortunate evils men must sustain; it has ever more extensive and corrosive consequences for the whole society. The result is a disease in the body politic; no country, least of all ours, can safely permit so grave an illness to spread unchecked.

Abolition of the draft is essential, but we are damned whatever we do. The crazy quilt of selective service laws and regulations is such that reduction of some injustices can only introduce new ones. Choosing either an all-volunteer army or one with conscripts is only to trade off one set of evils for another. Of the country's troubles arising from the military system, few are primarily caused by conscription. Though a deadly serious issue, the latter is just one of many manifestations of the self-destructive practices into which our mania for military security leads us.

In truth, we can solve our problems with militarism only by having no armed forces at all. Democracy and justice are quite incompatible with standing armies and the conditions they inevitably create in a society. Military systems cannot be "sanitized"; at best, nations can only reduce their inherent evils to levels tolerable for the sake of defense. If you must have a "defense force," then you had better count the social costs more carefully and realistically than this country has in the past, and shape the forces accordingly. However, some of us think the costs prohibitive whatever the shape.

The United States can have a standing army less pernicious than the present one, but only if we weigh civil needs in balance against military requirements, as if the former were no less vital to the continuing life of the nation. Since 1950, almost anything supposed to increase our "external security" could be successfully demanded by the Department of Defense. Even the war hawks may now have to realize that such "preparedness" must be greatly reduced, however less "secure" that makes us, if the nation is to survive.

Pogo once said, "We have met the enemy and he is ourselves." He was right.

Comment by Allen M. Lenchek

I WANT TO ADDRESS myself to Points 4 through 8 of Henri Rabasseire's article "Do We Really Want a Volunteer Army?" Each of these arguments deals with the question of the use to which the army is put. Point 6 argues for a large army in order to further a particular, if dubious, policy but it does not make clear why a volunteer force could not be just as large if pay levels, etc. were high enough. Point 4 suggests that draftees will refuse to carry out certain orders that volunteers would obey while Point 8 states directly what Points 5 and 7 imply, namely that a draftee army is more amenable to social control than a volunteer force.

Let me begin by stipulating that it is easier to control a draftee army. Clearly some of the opposition to the war in Vietnam derives from the fact that conscripts are being killed instead of simply "mercenaries." It is also probably true that draftees would be less reliable in "beating down insurrection." In sum, let us grant that a volunteer army is subject to greater misuse.

We must, however, consider the following. Each of the arguments cited involves the achievement of desirable aims: preventing the use of the army against its own people, preventing colonial wars, deterring aggression, stabilizing the international situation, and assuring civilian control over the military. Every one of these aims, however, can be achieved in a number of ways. A draftee army is the most expensive of all possible ways, not in coin of the realm but in human terms. The price paid by the draftee is beyond all measure. He is compelled to submit to the total dominance of the state, coerced into involuntary servitude. His humanity is negated by the denial of his freedom. Once in the army, he may be asked to sacrifice his life in order to prick the conscience of the citizenry and thus generate opposition to a Vietnam war. In short, the draftee is made a hostage to governmental irresponsibility.

In view of the enormous human cost of

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such a policy, it is incumbent upon the proponents of a draft to demonstrate that no alternatives exist *and* that a draft can guarantee success. They must not only show that it is impossible to avoid future Vietnams and to have civilian control of the military *without* a draft but that *with* a draft these goals are assured. Failing such a showing, they have no right to demand so great a sacrifice from our youth as long as there exists any hope at all of achieving these aims through alternative policies.

It is particularly ironic to hear this argument for a draft proposed by opponents of the Vietnam war. Our failure to end this unjust war should not be reason to saddle our young men with conscription. They should not be made to pay with their liberty for our political failure. They should not be made to buy with their bodies the social control of the military that we of the left have failed to achieve. Their lives are not ours thus to manipulate.

Comment by Henry Judd

HENRI RABASSEIRE is right in his argument against a voluntary army and in reminding us that Marx "favored a universal labor service." I wish he had spelled this out in more detail as a possible alternative to our present system which is bankrupt and beyond repair. While the establishment of such a system will not automatically reverse the condition of a distraught and disoriented youth and student movement, initiating a discussion about national service might be helpful.

The cure lies in the creation of some kind of national service system. Between the ages of—say—19 and 25, all American youth (I see no reason why this should not include girls) would be called upon to serve in a capacity of their own choice for a period of two years. At the decision of the individual, this two-year service span could be broken up into minimum six-months' stretches, with delays or postponements of a year or more in between.

All those who wish to opt out of military training would have that right. They may serve their two years (or any part of it) in either the overseas Peace Corps, or in the domestic Youth Corps or any branch of it (VISTA, antipoverty program, etc.), or in any medical or hospital capacity of their choice. Combinations of these options may fill out the two years. Military service for one- or two-year periods will exist.

Upon completion of this national service, all will enter a reserve formation. In a period of national emergency, the government shall have the right to call up those with military training. Those who have served in nonmilitary capacities may be called up and asked to perform services only in keeping with their training unless they decide otherwise.

Under such a system, the present religious qualifications for conscientious objectors will be removed; the true objector will become the individual who refuses in principle to perform any type of service, military or nonmilitary.

The above, of course, presents but the bare bones of a national service system; there are admittedly a host of problems that would arise in working it out.

Henri Rabasseire Replies

LET ME SAY first that I am gratified to have provoked a thoughtful discussion. I consider all three letters as genuine contributions to an essential debate, and most of their points well taken. We are confronted with a real problem, i.e., one where neither side is likely to be right or wrong. Each of the participants in the discussion concedes that something may be said for another point of view, and what is at stake here is really not the justice and feasibility of any particular style of army, but the basic conception one has of a citizen's duty to society and to the state.

Henry Judd takes the socialist point of view, that a man must give some years of his life to essential services that would not become available but for some kind of coercion. It is in the nature of a labor service that some of its

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tasks may be unpleasant or even repugnant. As is well known, Fourier thought of using children to clean the sewers because—long before Freud—he had observed that children love to play with dirt. However, I am afraid that not all jobs have some perverse attraction for somebody, and it is naive to assume that at all times enough volunteers will be found for jobs involving the killing of people—personally I must confess that I would not even volunteer for a job involving the killing of animals. It is even more naive, I think, to assume that enough volunteers would be forthcoming if only one were to raise the pay. I deny this categorically. Such offers are subject to the law of diminishing returns, and beyond a certain threshold an additional $100 per day will no longer increase the number of applicants, if the job involves killing. This leaves Mr. Judd with the question: what do you do if the labor service does not produce enough applicants for defense jobs? On the basis of his philosophy, Judd must conclude that then the state must find some fair means of selecting and coercing. For having conceded the principle of labor service, he has admitted that the state may coerce individuals to do distasteful or reprehensible jobs.

This is not Dr. Lenchek's predicament. He does not assume that the state has the right to place a human being under discipline. Indeed, he is so sure that the state does not have such rights that he will agree to conscription (I was speaking of conscription, not of the draft) only if I can guarantee that it will prevent another Vietnam. Now I certainly cannot guarantee such a thing; I only claim that the present system, even with its blatant injustices and other imperfections, has toppled one President and forced a considerable reduction in the level of fighting. No mean achievement, and if "for example" were as much proof as the opponents of conscription seem to think, it would be quite telling. The conscription system does not guarantee civilian control but it certainly is the only way to make civilian resistance felt. Dr. Lenchek has not answered his own question, how a professional army would be made responsive to public opinion. In fact, he is not concerned with the political issue of an unjust war; he is concerned only with saving individuals from involuntary servitude.

It is here, I think, that the issue can be joined most sharply: those proponents of a volunteer army for whom Dr. Lenchek speaks would be satisfied if decent people were allowed to drop out; I think this is not desirable, nor can it be the attitude of responsible citizens. If a war is felt to be unjust, people must be given an opportunity to resist, and they can do so only by refusing to be inducted. Dr. Lenchek assumes a state which protects those who take no responsibility for its actions; I assume a state to which the individual offers resistance if he can no longer identify with its purposes and actions.

Mr. Hoffman is aware of this; in fact he concedes my whole point when he writes, "public discontent with conscripts being sent to die in Vietnam became politically significant only when there was wide dislike of the war for other reasons. . . . Maybe continuing the draft would help lead to a reversal of our interventionist policy. . . ."

This is the point I was trying to make, and in this connection I should like to expand on Points 6 and 7 which Mr. Hoffman takes so lightly. In view of increased sensibilities among the educated, and especially among the scientists who are exposed to public opinion at the universities, the cooperation of professionals in defense work is no longer assured unless the rationale of the required service is transparent to those enlisted and to their environment. For this reason I would prefer to keep the universities in the "draft" status instead of isolating scientific defense work in army arsenals. Here the mercenary argument probably is correct: it is possible, by increasing the input of money, to train morons to invent all the war machinery the military wants. But precisely this I wish to avoid. If we need a defense establishment at all, we should have one that is responsive to public opinion on all levels—of the draftee, the officers' corps, the defense workers, and the defense scientists.

BUT DO WE NEED a defense establishment? Mr. Hoffman is right, of course—the only satisfactory alternative to the present system is (a) a

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society that does not go to war; (b) no defense establishment.

Dr. Lenchek seems to take a similar position; he thinks it is possible to have a society in which those who like war may be engaged in it, but others may not have to be involved. In writing my ten "theses" I was conscious of not writing about a utopia and of not dreaming about that future I hope to help in being born.

I was writing for the purposes of the day where the question is to choose between the present system, a volunteer army, and a militia-type army. I have pleaded for the latter, and I am sorry that some of my correspondents still confuse it with the present system. (Even so, I would deny Mr. Hoffman's assertion that we have a mercenary army.) I also was writing without any illusion that disarmament negotiations might in the near future bring about anything better than a halt of the present race and a freeze at the present equilibrium. Of course, I would like to see disarmament to proceed, but in writing I had in mind a condition of world armament that even under the most favorable assumptions might exist in the next decade, i.e., far short of general and complete disarmament. Moreover, I had in mind the highly efficient specialist army that Germany has been able to build under the imposed restriction of 100,000 men. Finally, I had in mind that we are living, as Lenin said, in a system of states that produces its natural rivalries and alliances.

One must not allow one's analytical abilities to be distracted by the Vietnam war; there is little likelihood that we might see anything similar in the near future. It is not the model of the international situation today, but a freak. The normal threat of war in our age is of quite a different nature: China's threat to India, the Kashmir conflict, the Israeli-Arab war, the internationalization of civil wars in Africa, the Cuban missile crisis, the unsolved German question, etc. In all such conflicts the neighboring and the big powers intervene because they cannot help being involved. For purposes of maintaining the equilibrium they need armies, but to limit the intervention and to restrain the military they need militias.

I agree that no particular army organization is an absolute guarantee against misuse; I argue that *some* styles have a *relatively* better chance of assuring civilian control than others. In this respect, my correspondents are less than fair to my argument: they urge on me the insight that any army might get us into trouble. But let not the imperfections of the good tempt you to exchange it for something bad. And if you want to win with Gandhi's methods, take care that your adversary is British.

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Richard Robbins

A Poet Among the Young

THE YEAR OF THE YOUNG REBELS, by Stephen Spender. New York: Random House. 186 pp. $4.95.

> I felt very unsure of myself with Chalmers [an orthodox Communist friend of the thirties in Berlin] as I confessed to my dislike of violence, my attachment to freedom of self-expression, my wish nevertheless for revolutionary changes which would produce a socially just international society without destroying the liberty of the individual. He took his pipe out of his mouth and said with friendly terseness: "Gandhi!"
>
> —Stephen Spender, in *The God That Failed*

WHAT was Stephen Spender to the students and what were they to him in 1968, "the year of the young rebels"? They, the *engagé* and the *enragés,* were seeking to restructure the university and radicalize the society (Columbia, the Sorbonne), to enlarge the breathing space of human freedom inside the Communist-controlled academy (Prague), to express their alienation from an uncaring establishment preoccupied with prosperity in the Flat Society (West Berlin). He, on the other hand, represented no cause other than "freedom of self-expression" and carried no ideological luggage other than the wish for a "socially just society" consistent with "the liberty of the individual." He wandered about on the edge of the student storms, spoke to old faculty friends, mostly listened to the students, and tried to make sense of the demonstrations, the capture of buildings, the exhilarating slogans (*Vive la communication! À bas la télécommunication!*), the explosion of talk, the erratic political strategy.

The famous English poet was not asked to read his poems, nor discuss Auden, nor recount his brief attachment to, and subsequent deep disillusionment with, Stalinism in the thirties, nor compare "his" Spain with "their" Vietnam. Over thirty, in fact exactly twice so and white-haired, he found himself once mistaken for Herbert Marcuse. He was questioned about the subvention of *Encounter* by the CIA and he told the students he had resigned as soon as the facts were verified. In the end, when spring passed into summer and the students went home, he, too, went home and wrote up his reflections.

The last thing one would have expected from this brief encounter, this soft brush of thoughtful poet against angry student, is a good book. Yet *The Year of the Young Rebels* is just that, a good book. In his travels from New York, to Paris, to Prague, to West Berlin, Spender, first of all, keeps his head; poetic sensibility is wedded to sensible politics. He understands the depth of the student grievances, whether in the context of the unfreedom of a Czechoslovakia or the slack freedom of a California, and at the same time he is concerned that the student rebellion will spend itself in a spasm of fury on campus instead of being worked out from the campus base into the larger political community. He remains open to the spirited aims and revolutionary elan of the Columbia radicals but takes a stern view, quite rightly, of their muddled strategy. How did they suppose they could turn the country round by turning a university upside down? He calls Columbia's rebellion a "happening" and adds, "Strategy is something to which the students have scarcely paid attention. Yet in some respects they are God's gift to the strategy of the other side." (Mr. Nixon can testify to that!)

Spain taught Spender never to underestimate the generous idealism of the young when pitted against the forces of injustice. Spain also taught him how swiftly a democratic left can be undermined by its "friends" on the left who proclaim toughness as truth, socialism as heroism-plus-catechism. Remembering what the Communists, as well as Franco, did to the Spanish Republic in the thirties, Spender is not a man to be swept

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away by the student radicals' praise for Che Guevera or Chairman Mao in the sixties. He sees the poetic impulse, all right, in "up against the wall, mother fucker," but he knows clenched fists are no substitute for the political impulse.

IN FRANCE, if the students had far more to be angry about than in America—the rigid centralization, the raw-concrete quality of the new universities, the dismal examination system—their anger ended in a comparable sputtering-out after nights of high drama, marathon discussions, and full-scale battle with the police. Here again, in a vivid chapter on "the Sorbonne Revolution" Spender is able to participate, as poet and humanist, in the students' feeling for spontaneity and the free play of the spirit in the face of the counterforces: ossified bureaucracies, dead-weight unions, bourgeois attitudes, consumer society. Still, poets and plumbers both have to recognize that the moving phrase "imagination *IS* revolution" will not resolve such issues as the failure of the French workers and students to come together or the desire of the middle class to preserve its own French version of "lawanorder." Wanting to see the French students' revolution succeed, Spender watched it drown in a sea of words. I think he underestimates how close the students came, even on the basis of "the spontaneity of direct democracy," to unseating the government, but he is surely right to point out to Cohn-Bendit and his friends that organization is not necessarily stifling, that even revolutions must have it.

THE CZECH AND THE GERMAN STUDENTS in Spender's narrative hold our interest more strongly than the Americans and the French because they are still in the process of working their way out from under severe political repression. In the Czech case, a year after the brutal Soviet invasion, we are talking not about consumer values or restructuring faculty senates but about elemental human freedom, an end to censorship, the right to study and live a little too. In the case of West Germany the students have discovered that it is not enough to celebrate the contrast of free West Germany and unfree East Germany behind the Wall. Spender describes the way in which surface prosperity and the "deafening silence" of intellectual life in West Germany are terribly oppressive.

IN A SERIES of rather loose-end essays which follow the sharply-etched reports on the student revolts, Spender arrives at some suggestions for change in the universities and, implicitly, the larger society. They are generally reasonable and sensible except for a proposal to have students sit in as observers at the United Nations "to see what the problems are through the lives of those who are trying to deal with them," a proposal that could only heighten the sense of student frustration. Spender wants traditional scholarship and the new activism to exist side by side at the university. He thinks it absurd for students to be preoccupied with controlling the appointment of professors; it is accessibility of teachers to students that matters, not student power over teachers. He welcomes the widest measure of student protest, provided it does not take the ugly turn of total contempt for disinterested knowledge and the free play of ideas, provided as well that it addresses itself to sustained attack on "war and armaments, racial inequality, the deterioration of the cities, the pollution of the atmosphere, the population explosion . . . which will condition all other problems." I find it appropriate that Spender, whose best poems are in praise of "those who in their lives fought for life," should in the end urge the student rebels to join mood to action, spirit to organization: Become an international pressure group, he says. Sentimental bourgeois liberalism, the new wave of student leaders would reply. But, then, even Marcuse no longer pleases the hottest visionaries among them.

If there is, as usual in Spender, vagueness and confusion when it comes to action and program, no matter. He is trying to tell the students something valuable, whether they are bound for the barricades or the library. It is that they "have to anticipate this world and prepare themselves in every way for it."

TO CONTRIBUTORS

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Robert L. Hoffman

Pioneers of the Left

THE ORIGINS OF SOCIALISM, by George Lichtheim. New York: Frederick A. Praeger. 302 pp. $6.95 (paper $2.95).

ONE OF THE MOST INTELLIGENT and prolific among contemporary historians of socialism, George Lichtheim displays in almost all of his work two sides: he is often annoyingly facile and cocksure, yet illuminating to a degree more restrained authors rarely are. His most recent book, *The Origins of Socialism*, seems to me, however, a failure. Lichtheim surveys his subject without caring to learn much from it and without offering any strikingly new insights or information. One's major impression is that the book, the first part of a larger history of socialism, was written in a hurry to get on to matters more interesting to Lichtheim than the antecedents of Marxism.

I think he also has been hasty, even careless, in his selection and organization of material for discussion and in many of his conclusions, but this leads to the consequences of a far more serious shortcoming: Lichtheim has little sympathy or feeling for those unfortunate enough not to have benefited from Marx's discoveries.

The book, which concludes with a chapter on "the Marxian synthesis," treats earlier socialist thought as a dull prelude to a grand finale. It is rather like a psychoanalyst dashing off a history of philosophy taken as a series of glimpses of what Freud would finally discover. That which does not prefigure Marx, Lichtheim either excludes or treats with a disdain ranging from the gently patronizing to open hostility. (The last he displays toward Proudhon.)

In an important but restricted sense, the origins of socialism *are* just a prelude to Marx's synthesis, since there is so much that he grasped and explained far better than his predecessors. But Marx could scarcely include in his vision or explain adequately with his science all that concerns the left today. Much was unforeseen or slighted by him, and much more so by his followers.

The so-called utopians who came before Marx have much to tell us; but the sympathetic understanding of distant points of perspective that is vital to good intellectual history seems doubly difficult to attain here because Marx has so altered our vision. The frequent brilliance and fecundity of early socialist thought can nevertheless be astonishing, even though it consists of partial insights only. Where they fit the Marxian system they were superseded and where they were not, the ideas have usually been disregarded or scorned by most socialists.

Lichtheim, whose own perspective derives from Marxism, has not left its exclusiveness far enough behind to accept Marx's predecessors on their own merits and terms. He even calls up charges from old polemics, principally with respect to Proudhon. Some matters, like the origin of the anarchist's notorious phrase, "property is theft," or his attitude toward Louis Bonaparte, are the subjects of old controversies long settled and best not argued again, though on others one can grant Lichtheim his particular opinion. But how can he say Proudhon "extolled war" (in *La guerre et la paix*), when it should be obvious that the book actually praises war in its first half only the better to condemn it in the second? The matter would be minor, were it not that Lichtheim uses this and other gratuitous deprecatory observations to strengthen his more substantive criticisms. Since he minimizes or ignores Proudhon's positive achievements, this loaded presentation gives us only a caricature—with the result that his often penetrating points are thereby rendered useless. The rest of the figures in this book fare a little better.

His predetermined perspective is apparent when he writes, in reference to Tom Paine, "A socialist doctrine could not be formulated until industrial capitalism had revealed its secret. . . ." This perfectly Marxist statement is at best a half-truth, for the experience of the century following the appearance of *Das Kapital* has given ample cause to the belief that there should be more to socialism than response to and attack on industrial capitalism.

Like many others before him, Lichtheim takes great pains to identify what really was "socialism," and to distinguish it from radical democracy, utilitarianism, anarchism, and other "isms." Such a procedure is neither valid nor enlightening; the ideas and attitudes of

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real men do not fit into distinct categories except when rigidly doctrinaire—and that came only in socialism's later history.

WHEN SOCIALISM AROSE, in the early nineteenth century, men were just beginning to attain the means and hope of reducing or ending afflictions that most had always been forced to endure. In one way or another those whom we often label socialists concluded, "Most men are forced to live in severe material deprivation and spiritual degradation. No longer does it have to be so. Society as now constituted makes man miserable: we will reconstitute the social order to change this, making it possible for man to become all that he is capable of."

Socialists separated themselves from other believers in progress by their conviction that the liberation of human potential could come about only through major reconstruction of the social system. They did not think political changes such as their contemporaries envisaged were likely to do much to accomplish this task; politics and government had little place in the vision of many of them.

When the term "socialism" gained currency in the 1830s and 40s, this was about all it signified. "Socialists" focused on the "social problem"—this was for them a way of consciously distinguishing themselves from those who expected that all problems could be resolved through essentially political reform or revolution and who concentrated on these political changes. If the latter welcomed basic changes in social relationships—many did not —they expected them to follow from a reconstitution of the political system and from the natural evolution of the economy, which such change and an application of science would promote.

Socialism originated in the aftermath of the French Revolution of 1789–94, and in response to its experience and tradition—much more than to the yet nascent industrial revolution. The chief legacy of the French Revolution for social radicalism was that of left Jacobin republicanism, and it was to distinguish themselves from the essentially political orientation of the Jacobin tradition that early socialists identified themselves as those who focused on the "social problem."

Jacobin republicanism was essentially bourgeois, though not because it appealed to the bourgeoisie only, for a major part of the lower classes in France actively supported Jacobinism both during and long after the Revolution. Historical conditions were such that establishing a republic would establish the bourgeoisie as the preeminent segment of society, while promising little benefit to the poor and propertyless. This, however, was not recognized at first by the originators of socialism. And only after this recognition did socialism become closely associated with movements of laboring men struggling in opposition to rather than in subordinate alliance with bourgeois groups striving to reshape the world into a form whose principal beneficiaries would be the middle class.

Now all this is too imprecise to make convenient historical distinctions. "Socialists" were differentiated from others by temperament, direction of concerns, and areas of emphasis; both the diversity of their views and their frequent closeness to others who denied themselves the label made the identity of socialism uncertain. Later applications of ideas to practice and the definition of doctrines made identification convenient—but at heart socialism remains a matter of temper and relative emphasis, with the identity of "true" socialism as uncertain as ever.

Most of the elements characteristic of later socialist thought can be found in the early stages, although there they are neither contained and ordered by the systematic theses of Marxism nor adapted to the requirements of actual mass movements. In consequence, the early theory is "utopian" in the usual pejorative sense but is also often illuminating at just those points where traditional Marxism shrouds the things we need to see.

Pre-Marxist socialists were weakest in economics, evolving no sound substitute for the analytic structure of liberal economic theory. They did, however, develop sharply effective criticisms of the monstrosities of social and economic inequality and of the frequent absurdity of liberal assumptions. We find, for instance, a wide and perceptive acquaintance with the facts of economic injustice in Fourier's work, his critique developed alongside those fantastic utopian schemes many have heard of but few had the patience to read. Proudhon may have been the bad economist Marx said he was, but he did rip away liberal political

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economy's cloak of complacent ethical neutrality and undermined the claims of bourgeois values to universal justification. Such attacks, divorced as they are from the constrictive framework of Marxist economic science, are the sort of fresh versions of the familiar that can provide stimulus for new thought.

The great dream of a world made happy through industrialization under a planned economy and total social management originated with the first major socialist, Saint-Simon. His naively prophetic vision poses an ironic contrast to the reality of present-day technocracy; it is fitting that in writing of his vision he first addressed himself to bourgeois entrepreneurs and scientists. Only in his later works and in those of his followers did Saint-Simonism develop a profound concern for the class of the "most numerous and most poor." But Saint-Simonism also became wary of the dangers of leaving social direction to expert administrators and scientists; hence the evolution of schemes for control of the technical elite by others with a highly developed moral and aesthetic sense. The dream became one of universal moral regeneration as well as of rational organization; the modern tragedy has been to suppose the latter would suffice or that it would by itself produce the former.

Other utopian plans—self-sufficient small communist societies, producers' and consumers' cooperatives, state-initiated enterprises operated by workers—either proved impractical or could be put to use only in modified forms. The plans themselves are no more practical now than when first conceived, but many of the concerns and insights that went into their formulation remain important. One of the most striking examples is the work of Fourier, whose endlessly detailed and frequently bizarre schemes contain countless remarkable perceptions of the fundamental social and psychic needs of men. His intention was to make society fit the true nature of man, rather than remaking or repressing human nature to suit the requirements of a rational social order.

Then there are among early socialists varying notions of the "natural" community and of the social relationships appropriate to it, and ideas about the essentials of true equality. There are the elements of a libertarian tradition, which was emphasized in anarchism and syndicalism but could never be squeezed out of the more authoritarian areas of socialist development. All this and much more belongs to that version of Western humanism which is socialism. Socialists are discovering that this humanist core is as important to them as the science and struggle embodied in the Marxist legacy, and they can find it elsewhere in the movement's origins than in the early works of Marx. But that this is so they can hardly learn from Lichtheim's latest book.

Irving Howe

The Authority of Failure

MARTOV: A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY, by Israel Getzler. London and New York: Cambridge University Press. 246 pp. $12.50.

PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED political defeat like to console themselves with the thought of historical vindication. The past has rejected them, the future will reject the past. Perhaps. But mostly it's an illusion: history seldom vindicates anyone, let alone the losers and the just.

Shortly after the Bolsheviks seized power Trotsky made a speech at a Soviet session in which he pointed his finger at Julian Martov, the brilliant and equivocating left-Menshevik leader, and consigned him to "the dust-bin of history." Trotsky was, in one sense, right: Martov would die a powerless and penniless exile in Berlin, his books unread and his name unknown to anyone but a handful of socialists. That Martov's impassioned outcries against the authoritarian excesses of early Bolshevism have been shown to be entirely correct, entirely warranted—has this prevented the repetition of those excesses on a far larger scale? A few of us who once gave our minds to Trotsky as the spokesman for History have since learned to give our hearts to Martov as its victim. But what does it matter, in the scale of that History in which both Trotsky and Martov believed?

History offers the loser one vindication:

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someday a learned and conscientious man comes along and writes a Ph.D. dissertation about his efforts and errors. The result may even be published. Martov has found his biographer in Professor Israel Getzler, who teaches history at an Australian university and obviously knows the Russian revolutionary tradition intimately. His book is scrupulous, nuanced, scholarly; but dry, hopelessly dry. Martov's ideas are carefully described, but Martov the man is all but invisible—the restless chain-smoker, the inventive bohemian, the warm-spirited comrade, the humane and not very disciplined revolutionist, the ineffectual leader of 1917, and finally the hero in defeat, the Martov who stays a few years in Bolshevik Russia warning its rulers against the *hubris* of power and speaking finally, in Scott Fitzgerald's memorable phrase, with "the authority of failure."

Born Julius Tsederbaum, Martov came from a liberal Jewish family, *Maskilim* (Enlighteners) who passed on to him their mixture of high-mindedness, passion, and skepticism. Arrested at eighteen for participating in a demonstration, he began his life as a revolutionary—but that rare creature, a revolutionary with a sense of irony:

> Seeing myself in an old-fashioned, cumbrous coach between two very real gendarmes, I experienced at last, as it were, an aesthetic satisfaction. One cannot be a youth of eighteen and not feel the need for a romantic setting to fit such a serious situation.

The young man had brains. He wrote fluently. He was completely selfless. Soon in exile, he became a leading Russian social democrat, collaborating for a time with Plekhanov and then with Lenin; he was and would always remain, in the Western non-Bolshevik sense, an orthodox Marxist and left socialist. His outlook was essentially Western—perhaps that helps explain his failure in Russia—and as early as 1903 he was posing the central problem of the social democratic underground in a way sharply different from that of Lenin: how, as Getzler puts it, "to reconcile the urgent need for conspiracy with the yearning for the creation of a broadly-based social democratic party of the working masses." Unlike some Mensheviks, he grasped the need for disciplined underground cadres in the repressive society of Czarism; unlike most Bolsheviks, he believed that the ultimate goal was nevertheless the creation of a mass democratic party on the Western model. Were these two perspectives compatible? It is a question endlessly haunting but impossible to answer, for the only binding test would have been a democratic phase in Russian history during which the underground movement could have emerged as a mass political party.

Martov soon joined in the debate that preoccupied the Russian Marxists: what would be the nature of the forthcoming Russian revolution? The country, all agreed, needed a bourgeois revolution to clear away the absolutist semifeudalism of Czarist society. But could the bourgeoisie, timid before the power of the state and fearful of the masses gathering on its flank, provide the necessary leadership? Could the bourgeoisie still carry through the bourgeois revolution? Plekhanov believed that the job of the Russian socialists was to spur the bourgeoisie into fulfilling its historical tasks; Lenin, that the bourgeois revolution could no longer be entrusted to the bourgeoisie but had now to be taken over and carried out by an alliance of peasantry and proletariat; Trotsky, that the tasks of the bourgeois revolution could no longer be realized unless telescoped with those of a socialist revolution under proletarian leadership. In the main, Trotsky's analysis was borne out by the events of 1917—though what happened afterward supports the views of those who feared the consequences of his prognosis. As for Martov, Getzler tells us that he

> remained essentially faithful to the doctrine originally expounded by Plekhanov . . . that in backward Russia the coming revolution would be a "bourgeois" revolution. . . . Martov allowed only one possibility of the seizure of power by the social democrats: in the exceptional case that the victory of the revolution and of a democratic republic could not be secured otherwise . . . .

But that was precisely the nub of the matter: whether in Russia the "exceptional case" might not prove to be the overriding historical reality. Flawed from the outset, Martov's position nevertheless had a rationale: in the forthcoming bourgeois revolution, the bourgeoisie could not be expected to act with the boldness that had characterized it during an earlier era in the

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West, therefore it required constant spurring on from the radical parties. Yet the socialist parties should not enter coalition governments with the bourgeois parties, since these would implicate the socialists in measures that, if historically unavoidable, were nevertheless of a kind for which they should not take responsibility; and besides, the principle of the independence of socialist parties was, in the early years of this century, still adhered to by almost all Marxist tendencies. Finally, the idea proposed by Trotsky—that the socialist parties should lead in a revolution telescoping bourgeois and socialist tasks—struck Martov as an absurdity, since the proletariat was far too weak to rule alone *in a democratic way*, and since the consequence of such an effort was likely to be one or another kind of Bonapartist elitism. Weak as Martov's own theory may have been, his criticism of the others has largely been vindicated by experience.

Meanwhile this "inventive statesman of eternal wavering," as Trotsky called him half in contempt and half in admiration, would remain a firm socialist: he took an "internationalist" position during the First World War, that is, he opposed the war as imperialist, and later, during the 1917 crisis, he found himself all but isolated on the left of the Menshevik movement.

> Martov made it clear from the beginning that he strongly disapproved of the Mensheviks' joining in a coalition government [with the bourgeois parties]. . . .
>
> He decided the question of power according to views he had held at least since 1905: the coming revolution was bourgeois; the bourgeoisie was destined to rule when the tsar fell; socialists ought therefore to entrench themselves in organs of revolutionary self-government [the Soviets] to exert pressure from without on a government which they must not join because it represented a historical phase and a hostile class which in due course socialism would have to overthrow.

The result was political paralysis. The bourgeois parties were inept and feeble; a coalition government of the socialist parties, either with the bourgeois liberals or among themselves, was ruled out in principle. What remained? For Martov's idea that the socialists play the role of constructive opposition could make sense only if there were a secure and reasonably progressive regime toward which to be in opposition. Pressure on the bourgeois parties would have made sense only if the latter had been willing to enact the socioeconomic measures that would enable Russia to reconstitute itself on a democratic basis: in shorthand, land, bread and peace, the very things the Bolsheviks promised. Lenin and Trotsky saw the problem more sharply, if you will, more dialectically, than Martov. They saw the vacuum of power, they saw it would have to be filled.

By July 1917, a few months before the Bolsheviks took power, Martov began to change his views. He came out for a government based solely on an alliance of the Soviet parties, since, he said, the bourgeoisie was in effect abdicating power. Either the left would fill the gap or a reaction would follow. But it was late, perhaps too late, for by then the Mensheviks and SRs were steadily losing influence and the Bolsheviks were beginning—at least since Lenin's April Theses—to prepare for their seizure of power. It is a matter of speculation whether, in Getzler's excellent formulation,

> Martov's scheme was not, in principle at least, a viable third possibility to Kornilov [the reactionary general] on his white horse, or Lenin and Trotsky on an armoured car. Perhaps it was not only that Martov and his allies lacked the right sort of will and temperament. It may also have been that Martov's timing was wrong, that he arrived at important decisions too late and with insufficient clarity . . . he never succeeded in bringing the instruments of political influence and pressure under his control. His task was to reassert his control over . . . a party which had been alienated from him [the Mensheviks] and which had gone astray, and he did not manage to recapture it in time. His party came back to him only in December 1917 and already long before that, by the latter part of September, it was all but a spent force; its opportunity had passed.

The scene that is now played out is one of high drama. At a Soviet Congress after the Bolshevik victory, Trotsky dismisses Martov as a bankrupt and Martov, lonely, beaten, jeered at, walks out. His friend Boris Nicolaevsky has left a vivid recollection:

> Martov walked in silence and did not look back—only at the exit did he stop. A young Bolshevik worker [Ivan Akulov] in a black shirt and a broad leather belt, standing in the shadow of the columns, turned on Martov . . .

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> with unconcealed bitterness: "And we amongst ourselves had thought, Martov at least will remain with us." These words stung Martov. He stopped and in a characteristic movement tossed up his head as if making ready to reply but then he said only: "One day you will understand the crime in which you are taking part," waved his hand wearily and left the hall. . . .

History too has its sense of symmetry: the young Bolshevik worker would later disappear in the Stalin purges.

MARTOV'S GREAT PERIOD came in defeat. Here is a description of his hopeless struggle in the Soviet assembly, written by the Russian writer Konstantin Paustovsky:

> Tall, scraggy and irascible, a ragged scarf wound around his sinewy neck, he would jump up frequently to interrupt the speaker and shout words of indignation in a hoarse, breaking voice. An instigator of many a stormy incident, he would not calm down until he had been deprived of the right to speak or had been excluded from a few sessions.

For a few years Martov tried to constitute himself and his few followers as a loyal opposition to the Bolshevik regime, with the demand for the fulfillment of the Soviet Constitution as his main tactic for transforming the system and gaining a place for his party within it. In 1919 he published a document echoing Lenin's title, *What Is to Be Done?*, and advocating in effect the New Economic Policies which the Bolsheviks would adopt only in 1921 and "only after the economy had ground to a halt at Nicolai Bukharin's beloved 'point zero.'" Socialism, Martov kept insisting, requires "a maximum development of the capacity of the toilers for self-organization, for participation in social control. . . . Such cooperation of the toilers cannot function, nor even exist, if it is not impregnated from top to bottom with democracy." His criticisms at this point strikingly anticipate those of socialists 30 and 40 years later in regard to modern Communism:

> the actual practice of such dictatorship, the relations established between the dictatorial minority and the masses, would tend to "educate" the dictators into anything you like *except* into people capable of building a new society.

In 1923 Martov lay dying, an exile in Berlin; Lenin lay dying in Russia. And here Getzler records a remarkable story, but with so little seeming awareness of the significance of his material that he buries it—in a footnote:

> A. I. Rykov [the Bolshevik leader] told his relative Boris Nicolaevsky of a Politbureau meeting in the winter of 1922–23 at which the question of devising a roundabout way of assisting the gravely ill Martov with money for medical treatment had been raised by Zinoviev at the insistence of Lenin. "Even Stalin did not protest," said Rykov, "and he hated Martov. . . ."
>
> D. B. Ryazanov [the Russian Marxist scholar], upon his return from Berlin during the winter of 1922–23, was questioned by Lenin about Martov's health and whether he was in need of assistance. Whereupon Ryazanov replied curtly: "Anyway, he would not take it from you!"
>
> A. I. Svidersky, People's Commissar for Agriculture and a close friend of the Ulyanov [Lenin] family during the last months of Lenin's life, reported on Lenin's obsession to get together with Martov; paralyzed and having lost his speech, Lenin would point to Martov's books on his shelves and demand that a driver take him to Martov.

His name is not honored, his books are unread. No youth raise banners celebrating his memory.

David Spitz

Fables from Aptheker

THE NATURE OF DEMOCRACY, FREEDOM, AND REVOLUTION, by Herbert Aptheker. New York: International Publishers. 128 pp. $1.25.

EVERY ONCE in a while I seek a bit of comic relief from the burdens of our Kafkaesque world. One unfailing source has been, not the gyrations of so-called Communist parties and governments (which have provided moments of sorrow and anger), but the intellectual acrobatics of Communist "theoreticians." Over the years, to be sure, the contemplation of such exercises has furnished decreasing pleasure; for as the older theoreticians have died or defected their successors have rarely displayed the wit, analytic power, and massive even if unrefined learning characteristic of the breed. Herbert Aptheker's recent book is a case in point.

Aptheker opens his volume with a 20-page survey of "Freedom in History." He considers

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primarily "the three pre-eminent English speaking libertarians: John Milton, Thomas Jefferson, and John Stuart Mill." For all of them, he insists, class considerations were decisive in their definitions of freedom, and those definitions can only be understood in terms of their situations in history. Accordingly, he says of Milton that his *Areopagitica* "was a contribution to the debates in an England in civil war," and that the point of this essay was to argue against feudalism and in favor of the Reformation. But no one can tell from Aptheker's account what every student of English history knows: that the enemy Milton actually confronted was his own, or rather Cromwell's, Parliament; that *this* Parliament had renewed an old order forbidding unlicensed printing; and that Milton's marital difficulties had led him to publish, without license, several pamphlets on divorce. One of these had been attacked before that Parliament as "a wicked book"; Milton had been named in another action as a violator of the licensing law; and the *Areopagitica,* in the form of a speech to that Parliament, had been his reply. Feudalism and the Reformation, indeed!

Aptheker says of Jefferson that to understand him it is necessary to remember that when the Declaration of Independence said all men are created equal it meant some men, not all, not for example slaves. The latter portion of this statement is correct, but again no one can learn from Aptheker's account what is a first lesson for every student of the period: that this limitation of the principle of equality occurred *despite* Jefferson, not because of him. In his original draft of the Declaration Jefferson had included a paragraph attacking the English king for having

> waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. . . . He has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce, determining to keep open a market where MEN should be bought and sold. . . .

Or that Jefferson in his *Notes on Virginia* explained that these passages had been

> struck out in complaisance to South Carolina and Georgia, who had never attempted to restrain the importation of slaves, and who on the contrary still wished to continue it. Our Northern brethren also I believe felt a little tender under those censures; for though their people have very few slaves themselves yet they had been pretty considerable carriers of them to others.

WITH CAVALIER INDIFFERENCE to the wholesale assault conservatives have leveled against Mill throughout the last century, Aptheker joins the chorus of the authoritarian left, saying that Mill, a scion of the upper middle-class, favored employers over workers, that he was an elitist and a colonialist, and that he detested equality. No more curious set of absurdities could be propounded of a man who in his personal conduct and teachings defied middle-class ways and morality; who fought throughout his life for equality of educational opportunity and for the equality of the sexes; who supported labor unions, denied that it is just for *any* class to be other than a laboring class or for the lower classes to be dependent on the upper classes, and who insisted that, "given education and just laws, the poorer class would be as competent as any other class"; who recognized rights "only as existing in persons," not in property or things; who at the risk of his own professional reputation and career took on Carlyle, the Colonial Office, and British public opinion by denouncing and prosecuting the popular Governor Edward Eyre for his evil practices in Jamaica; and who became enough of a socialist to say that if he had to choose, he would prefer communism with all its evils to the then present state of society. Surely a self-proclaimed Marxist who quotes extensively from the first volume of *Capital* might be expected to have found there Marx's observation that "It would be very wrong to class [Mill] with the herd of vulgar economic apologists."

Two related points remain to be noted about this remarkable survey of freedom in history.

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One is that Aptheker keeps mistaking the genetic fallacy for an argument; he thinks he can refute a position not by dealing with its merits but by attacking the alleged source from which it derives. The other is the same disingenuous shifting of ground when he opposes to these so-called apologists for bourgeois freedom the glorious reality of the Soviet Union. Neither in a long quotation he employs from Harold Laski nor in his own subsequent remarks does he include a single statement concerning the advance of human freedom in that "socialist" country. What he does instead is talk about achievements in a variety of realms other than freedom, such as the Soviet Union's "effective opposition to racism and colonialism [*vide* Hungary, Czechoslovakia, African students in the U.S.S.R., and the Jews], and its indispensable support of the struggle for peace" [*vide* the Middle East]!

When we turn from the "bourgeois" thinkers to Aptheker's own thoughts on freedom, we move not only to new fancies but to a familiar recitation of old formulae. To rebut the view that mass revolutions are obsolete, Aptheker pretends that those who hold this view do not mean it to apply only to advanced industrial societies and that the Chinese, Cuban, and Egyptian revolutions were mass revolutions that disprove the thesis. He then talks at length, and in what he thinks are Marxist terms, of the conditions and elements of class revolutions—as if these had any relevance to the American scene.

Such bits of froth, along with the nonsense that "Then there will be forged a communist society in which the fullest freedom of self-expression in all the spheres of human activity, *and none colliding with the others' self-expression* [my italics], will exist," rendered further reading unnecessary. Whatever Aptheker's competence on the American Negro, he is clearly not a serious historian, nor yet even a novice in political and social theory.

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